

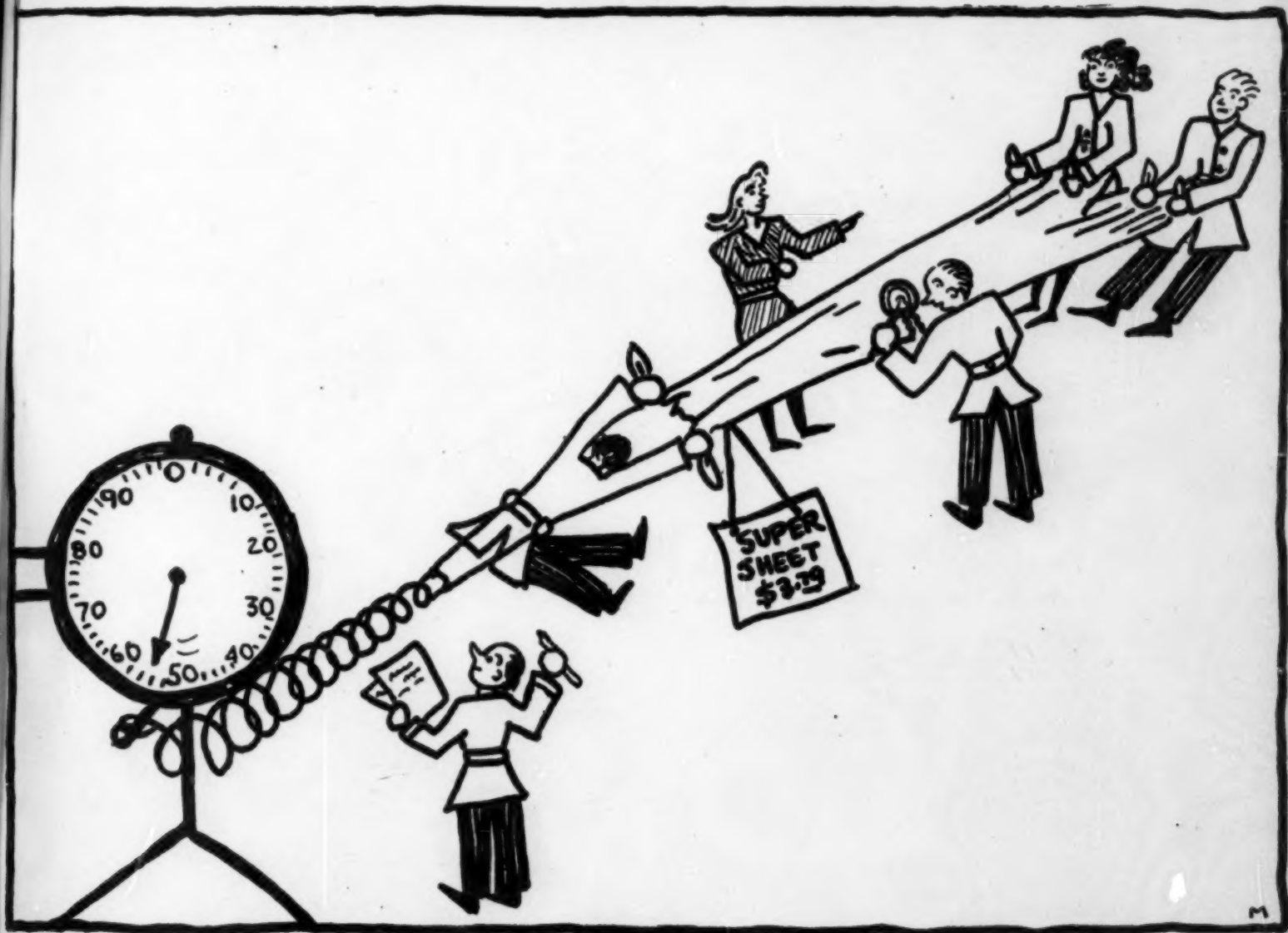
# Consumer Reports

"FACTS YOU NEED  
BEFORE YOU BUY"

VOL. 9, NO. 1

Published Monthly by Consumers Union

JANUARY 1944



SHEETS: PERCALE  
& MUSLIN  
BATH TOWELS

DICTIONARIES  
SCOURING POWDER  
THE B VITAMINS

CARE & REPAIR OF  
HOME EQUIPMENT  
SOCIAL SECURITY

# CU Associates

A new form of membership, called Consumers Union Associates, was established by the CU Board of Directors at its last meeting. We can do no better by way of recording and explaining this move than to reprint the following letter, which was mailed to all CU members in December.

Dear Member:

We don't know which category you fall in, but this letter is intended particularly for those members of Consumers Union whose income is above the average. If you are in that group, we want your help.

Here is the problem. Consumers Union, like every other organization and individual, has had to face sharply rising costs. Even a technical organization which tells people how to buy economically has to pay more for paper and printing, for materials and equipment, and for salaries.

Because the CU staff is expert at cutting costs and buying economically, the full impact of rising prices has been somewhat delayed in hitting us, but now it's here.

Since CU carries no advertising, it can't meet the problem as some publications have done, by raising advertising rates. There is only one place the additional money CU needs can come from and that is from CU members.

The CU Board of Directors doesn't want to get the money by raising the membership fee, however. We feel that would be a blow at the low-income families who need CU's help most.

We are, therefore, meeting the situation by establishing a new form of membership—to be called "Consumers Union Associates"—intended for those who can pay from \$10 to \$25 and who want to do it to help support the organization's work at a time when that work is so vital. Those who become Associates will receive all of the regular CU Publications. In addition, they will receive the Bound Volume of REPORTS at the end of the year, and any special CU publications that are current. For example, Associates would now receive the book GOOD HEALTH AND BAD MEDICINE by CU's medical advisor, Dr. Harold Aaron, and any new books and pamphlets issued during the year.

If you can afford to do so, I hope you will be among the first to make your contribution to the organization's work by becoming a Consumers Union Associate.

Cordially yours,

ARTHUR KALLET  
Director

**CONSUMERS UNION** is a non-profit organization chartered under the Membership Corporation Laws of New York State. Its purpose is to furnish unbiased, usable information to help families meet their buying problems, get their money's worth in their purchases, develop and maintain an understanding of the forces affecting their interests as consumers. Consumers Union has no connection with any commer-

cial interest and accepts no advertising; income is derived from the fees of members, each of whom has the right to vote for candidates to the Board of Directors. More than 70 educators, social workers and scientists sponsor Consumers Union and a national advisory committee of consumer leaders contributes to the formulation of policy (names of the members of the committee will be furnished on request).

**CONSUMER REPORTS** each month gives comparative ratings of a variety of products based on tests and expert examinations, together with general buying guidance, information on medical and health questions, and news of happenings affecting the consumer's interests. The Reports is the manual of informed and efficient consumers the country over.

**THE BUYING GUIDE** (published as the December issue of the Reports) each year brings together information from all the preceding issues with new material and special buying advice. Pocket-size, 384 pages, with ratings of several thousand products, the Buying Guide is an invaluable shopping companion. Every member gets a copy of the Guide with his membership.

**BREAD & BUTTER** reports each week on new and predicted price and quality changes in consumer goods, interprets Washington legislation as it affects consumers, reports government regulations and actions on the consumer front, advises on food buying and preparation.

**SUBSCRIPTION FEES** are \$4 a year, which includes subscription to the Reports and Buying Guide and Bread & Butter; \$3.50 without Bread & Butter (for foreign and Canadian memberships add 50¢). Reduced subscription rates are available for groups of 10 or more

(write for details). Library rates, for the Reports and Bread & Butter without the Buying Guide issue, are \$3.50; for the Reports alone, \$3.

Membership involves no obligation whatsoever on the part of the member beyond the payment of the subscription fee.

## Another Job for Consumers

Lots of consumers who are much too smart to be taken in by the street corner snake-oil merchant, confidently shell out their dollars at the drug store for *Listerine* or *Alka-Seltzer*. The reason, it appears, is that *Listerine* and *Alka-Seltzer* are produced and promoted not by plain, ordinary people like the snake-oil merchant, but by big companies. And the big companies have used practically every known form of propaganda to tell the world how scientific they are, how efficient, how clever, how selflessly and utterly devoted to the public interest.

Consumers who read or hear the big companies' statements about themselves in their ads (and who pay no attention to statements made about them by the Federal Trade Commission, the Food & Drug Administration, the Department of Justice, and such Congressional committees as the Truman Committee) can hardly be blamed for feeling that these companies are possessed of 'superior qualities, quite untainted by ordinary human feelings.

We doubt that many CU members are in this class, however. They have seen how big drug companies—the makers of *Vick's* nose drops and *Bromo-Seltzer*, for example—persuade consumers to buy products which are not only grossly misrepresented, but often dangerous to health and life. CU members have seen food products of the great Del Monte company and the Libby company—products represented to consumers as the very finest in quality—rated way down on the quality lists.

They have seen how the Westinghouse company, for all its great scientific laboratories and the beautiful industrial equipment it produces, was willing to sell to indiscriminating buyers an electric toaster that merited this rating by CU's technicians:

"... Door hinges very stiff; has small handles so placed as to make opening the door difficult. Considerable risk of burn, or of upsetting toaster when turning the toast. Fails to toast bread thoroughly along the side."

Actually, there is nothing surprising in the fact that big companies don't meet the standards of perfection they claim for themselves. The companies are only the people who own them and run them—ordinary little people, with their ordinary human wish to make as much money as they can and get ahead as fast as they can, and the ordinary human willingness to let the other fellow—competitor or customer—take care of himself.

The men who head the biggest corporations didn't get their jobs and don't get their huge salaries because they love consumers or are passionately devoted to public welfare or scientific progress. Most likely, they got where they are because they are experts at financial manipulation, know how to get good terms from bankers, arrange deals with important competitors, or get concessions from foreign governments. The consumer side of the business is likely to be left to subordinates who know that *their jobs* and *their salaries* depend on big sales and big profits, not on promoting the public welfare.

We're not pointing out things which, to critically-minded CU members, will be obvious, simply to attack business men. The special reason for going into the matter now is that many business leaders are demanding that the enormous problems of post-war readjustment of our economy be left in their hands; they insist that the busi-

Companies, even big companies, are people. That's one of the hardest lessons consumers have to learn.

(Cont'd on page 26)

# Consumer Reports

"MAKE YOUR CHOICE BEFORE YOU BUY"

"Because it was established for the very purpose of aiding families to buy wisely, to avoid waste and to maintain health and living standards, and because it is the largest technical organization providing such guidance, Consumers Union recognizes a special responsibility to the nation. In full awareness of that responsibility, we pledge ourselves to do everything in our power to help Americans as consumers make the greatest possible contribution to the national need."—FROM A RESOLUTION ADOPTED ON DECEMBER 10, 1941, BY THE DIRECTORS.

VOL. 9, NO. 1 • JANUARY 1944

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# REPORTS ON PRODUCTS

CHIEF TECHNICIAN: Sidney Wang

Ratings of products represent the best judgment of staff technicians or of consultants in university, governmental and private laboratories. Samples for test are in practically all cases obtained on the open market by CU's shoppers. Ratings are based on laboratory tests, carefully controlled use tests, the opinion of qualified authorities, the experience of a large number of persons, or on a combination of these factors. Even with rigorous tests, interpretation of findings is a matter on which expert opinion often differs. It is Consumers Union's pledge that opinions entering into its evaluations shall be as free from bias as it is possible to make them.

## SHEETS—*muslin & percale*

Ratings of 37 brands of percale and muslin sheets, with information on what is happening in this changing market, advice on what and how to buy, and suggestions on how to take care of your sheets

Don't count on the traditional "white sales" to replenish your dwindling sheet supply this season. Stores are having difficulty getting sheets at all, and they're not likely to sell present stocks at "sale" prices. The shortage appears to be country-wide, and CU's shoppers this year could find only 37 generally distributed brands, as compared with last year's 57. So take very good care of the sheets you have; replace sheets only if absolutely necessary.

The entire sheet situation is nothing less than chaotic. OPA regulations governing sheet standards have been in force—theoretically—since February, 1942. They set minimum requirements for tensile strength and weight and maximum permissible sizing; they require manufacturers to label sheets as to size and "type" (the "type" designates the number of threads to the square inch), and to indicate whether or not the sheet is a "second." But there is nothing in the order to prevent wholesalers and retailers from removing the label before it reaches the consumer. And if CU's purchases are any indication, that's just what happens somewhere along the line, most of the time—and the consumer is left with little or no label information to help him judge the quality of the sheet.

Here's the story: Twenty-eight of the sheets CU purchased came under OPA regulations, yet only two—*Pacific Mills Truth* and *Pacific Percale*—gave the required information on the label. Two sheets carried no informative label whatsoever, and the remaining 24 merely stated the type. Furthermore, CU's tests showed that ten of these 28 sheets didn't conform to OPA's requirements for tensile strength, and that

one of these ten—the labeled *Pacific Percale* mentioned above—claimed a tensile strength of 62 pounds in the filling, but tested only 44 pounds.

In addition, seven of the 28 sheets which came under OPA regulations were damaged to such an extent that they should have been sold as "seconds." Yet all were sold as first-quality merchandise—in direct violation of the ruling which requires that seconds be so labeled, and sold for 10% less than "firsts."

Nor is the price end of the OPA order any better enforced. For while the regulation ties the manufacturer's price for sheets to the price of raw cotton, and also fixes the price for various size sheets in the different types, CU was able to find no pattern of price-quality control.

When you go shopping, look first for the OPA label on the sheet. Ask the retailer for a label if none appears on the sheet. Then unfold the sheet—if you can get the retailer's consent—and examine it carefully. You're likely to find, as CU did, that many sheets which should be classed as seconds are being sold as firsts. If the retailer refuses to allow you to examine the sheet in the store, get his written guarantee that, should examination at home show it to be a second, he will refund 10% of the purchase price or exchange the sheet. You'll find that many seconds have only slight flaws, such as mend marks or oil stains; and since these do not affect wear, such sheets may be good buys at reduced prices. But don't buy seconds with serious flaws,

### *To get the most from your sheets:*

#### DO

- Place fresh-from-the-laundry sheets at the bottom of the pile each time, so that your supply will be used in rotation, and wear evenly distributed.
- Reverse the sheet each time it is used, placing the wide hem at the top one time, at the bottom the next time.
- Use a mattress pad to give an even surface under the sheet.
- Loosen edges of the sheet all around before stripping the bed.
- Launder sheets as soon as possible after they are taken off the beds.
- Store sheets unironed, if they're to be stored for a long time, to allow air circulation.
- Mend all rips and tears before laundering.

#### DON'T

- Don't use the sheet as a laundry bag.
- Don't allow sheets to flap in the wind when they dry, or to freeze stiff.
- Don't press the creases when you fold the sheets.
- Don't store damp sheets; they'll develop mildew.
- Don't use strong bleaches in excessive amounts.



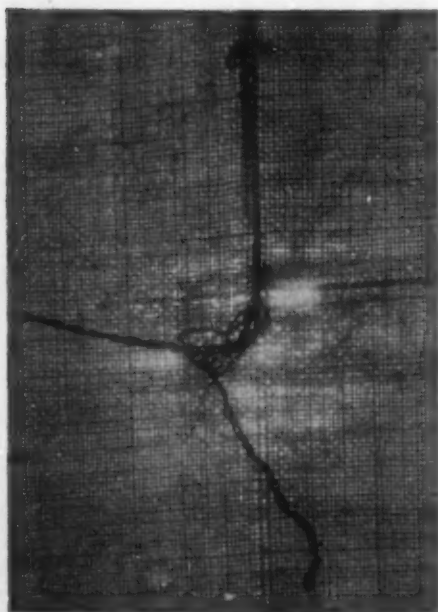
such as missing threads, threads caught in the weave, looped threads, gashes, mildew stains, frayed selvages and similar imperfections, since these do affect durability.

Some mills make a practice of selling their firsts under a widely advertised brand name, reserving another name for seconds of the same product. If you should run across an unfamiliar brand name bearing the name of the manufacturer of a well-known brand, check to see whether the sheet is a second.

#### FACTS ABOUT SHEETS

**TYPES:** According to OPA's classification, there are five grades or "types" of sheets. They are classified according to the number of threads per square inch: *Type 112*, a low-count, *low-quality muslin* sheet which is not widely sold, and was not included in CU's tests; *Type 128*, formerly known as *medium muslin*; *Type 140*, formerly called *heavy muslin*; *Type 180*, a percale, formerly called *high-count*; and *Combed Percale* (200 thread count), formerly known as *true percale*. This last is considered a luxury sheet, and it is not covered by the OPA regulations. Which type you buy depends on two things: how much you can afford and what you can find in the stores.

**MUSLIN VS. PERCALE:** Percalés are softer, lighter in weight, have finer threads and cost more. Muslins are relatively heavy in weight, and are



**DON'T** buy seconds with serious flaws that affect wear, such as the looped threads, shown in the enlarged section above.

#### HOW TO SAVE

**\$2.40**

Here's a way to save money and get better quality while you're doing it. Perhaps your stock of sheets is running low, and you've decided to replenish it with a half dozen new sheets. You've decided on percale because, considering the lower cost of laundering, you find they'll save money in the long run. And you won't be able to save by buying at the "white sales" this season, because there aren't any.

Cannon Lavenlawn, a popular brand, may have been the sheet of your choice. The price is \$4.10, or \$24.60 for six. But if you follow the ratings in this article, you'll buy Pepperell Peeress, which is even better in quality and costs 40¢ less per sheet. The difference—\$2.40—will make a good start toward the purchase of a War Bond.

intended for use when hard wear is expected. The initial cost of percale is comparatively high; but the lighter weight means—if you pay for laundry by the pound—a lower upkeep. Use of muslins can work up a pretty sizable laundering cost over a period of time, and they're rather difficult to launder at home, if you want to cut expenses that way. The difference between the lightest and the heaviest weight sheet tested by CU was about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  ounces per square yard, or something over  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound for a double bed sheet. This means a difference of 6¢ to 8¢ a sheet per laundering at ordinary pound-laundry rates.

As to wear, heavy muslin will outlast almost any percale. But it's likely, because of the extra softness and comfort of percale sheets, and the lower laundry upkeep, that most people who can afford the initial cost will prefer them to muslin.

**WEIGHT** is also a factor in the wear you can expect from a sheet. The lighter muslins and the percales run  $4\frac{1}{4}$  ounces or less to the square yard; heavy muslin weighs  $4\frac{1}{4}$  to 5 ounces. Since, in general, a sheet weighing less than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ounces to the square yard is likely to be sleazy, make sure that when you are considering a "fine" sheet, its fineness results from thin yarns, woven closely together, and not from sleaziness.

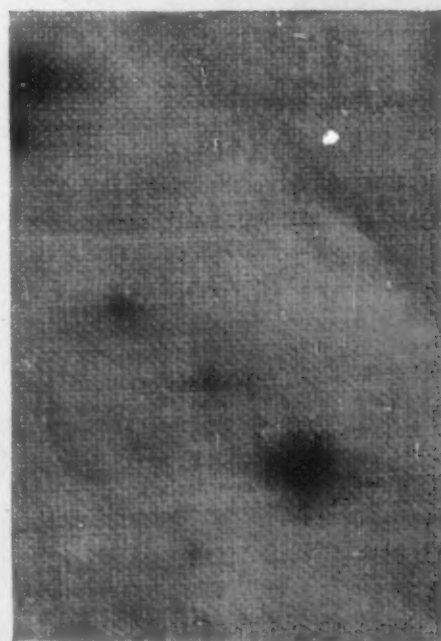
**THREAD COUNT** determines the feel or "hand" of a sheet, and the OPA classification is based on thread count. For example, Type 140 means that the sum of the warp and the filling threads is approximately 140

threads to the square inch. Sometimes the two thread counts are designated separately, as, for example, 77x70. That means that there are 77 warp threads and 70 filling threads to the square inch.

Percalés have relatively high counts; those CU tested ranged from 92 to 109 warp threads, and from 87 to 104 filling threads. The muslins, with heavier threads, had a warp range of 71 to 77 and a filling range of 58 to 71 threads to the inch. The higher the thread count, of course, the finer-textured the material. It's not safe to depend on "feel" alone; only by knowing the counts can you get a true idea of the balance of the weave. But in the absence of figures, you can learn something by stretching the fabric tightly between the hands, holding it up before a bright light, and examining it. If the weave is close and balanced, the light will come through in tiny, evenly-spaced pinholes.

**SIZING:** The firm, smooth feel of a well-balanced, close weave is sometimes simulated by a loose weave covered by a finishing material ("sizing") which, more often than not, "comes out in the wash." Excessive sizing can generally be detected by rubbing the fabric against itself. If a powdery material falls out, there is excessive sizing; don't buy the sheet.

Newly developed resin and other



**DO**, if they are sold at reduced prices, buy sheets with minor defects such as oil spots, easily removed in washing.

synthetic finishes won't show in the sizing test. They are not, as a matter of fact, in the same category, since they are incorporated directly in the fiber, do not come out in laundering, and increase the abrasion resistance of the sheet.

#### POINTS TO LOOK FOR

A good sheet should have the following characteristics:

1. A firm, tight weave.
2. Good resistance to abrasion.
3. High tensile strength.
4. Little powdery sizing.
5. Little shrinkage (5% is usually considered permissible).
6. Ends torn to size, not cut.
7. Adequate width in the hems (at least four inches total for the two).

CU's laboratory tests were based on these requirements, with tensile strength and resistance to abrasion given primary importance. Weight, thread count and shrinkage were also considered.

As indicated before, you cannot be assured that the sheet you buy is not a second unless you examine it carefully. Because of manpower shortages, inspection in many factories is rather slipshod. The sheets CU purchased and found to be seconds are so indicated in the ratings, but they were not considered "Not Acceptable" on this account. All tests were made on the undamaged portions of the sheets.

**SIZE:** Aside from other requirements of a good sheet, the size you buy must fit the mattress on which you use it, for maximum durability. A sheet that's too small for the bed will be strained in an effort to get an adequate tuck-in—and it will tend to pull out easily. To determine the length of the sheet you need, mea-

## Percale Sheets

BRAND & TYPE	PRICE	STATED SIZE (inches)	WEIGHT (ounces per sq. yard)	THREAD COUNT		TENSILE STRENGTH		ABRASION RESISTANCE
				Warp	Filling	Warp	Filling	
Aimcee Type 180.....	\$2.09	81x108	3.72	94	91	55.7	46.8	G
Filene's Own Empress Type 180 .....	1.99	81x108	3.61	92	90	61.9	53.7	G
Filene's Own DeLuxe Percale.	3.95	81x108	3.90	105	97	59.1	75.3	E
Pacific Type 180.....	2.09	81x108	3.71	95	93	61.4	44.3	G
Gimbel's Own Gabrielle Type 180 .....	2.39	81x108	3.69	94	89	55.4	42.8	F
Gimbel's Own Greymoor Per- cale .....	4.50	90x108	4.09	108	104	68.6	90.6	E
Cannon Lavenlawn Percale...	4.10	81x108	3.88	109	104	63.3	74.3	G
Cannon Cavalier Type 180....	2.39	81x108	4.03	97	90	64.2	55.1	F
Wamsutta Supercal Percale...	5.75	90x108	3.71	109	101	70.2	67.1	G
Macy's Supre-Macy Percale...	2.88	81x108	4.16	108	103	62.8	83.0	G
Macy's Type 180 .....	1.98	81x108	4.03	102	92	68.0	63.0	E
Pequot Type 180 .....	2.49	90x108	3.93	98	87	65.7	58.5	E
Regent Percale .....	4.15	81x108	3.93	107	97	77.8	68.2	G
Utica Percale .....	4.10	81x108	3.91	105	103	67.0	76.7	E
Pepperell Peeress Percale.....	3.70	81x108	3.97	104	98	67.1	82.1	E
Pepperell Percale Type 180....	2.19	81x108	4.18	99	92	65.3	57.9	E
Indian Maiden, Nashua Type 180 .....	2.80	90x108	3.93	98	89	72.4	55.3	G
Fieldcrest Duracal Type 180	2.14	81x108	4.14	98	88	78.5	66.2	G
Pepperell Princess Percale....	2.69	81x 99	3.95	104	100	66.3	83.4	E

Abrasion Resistance: E=Excellent; G=Good; F=Fair.

sure the length, add twice the height of the mattress, then add at least 12 inches (six for each end) for tuck-in, five inches for shrinkage and about four inches or more, depending on actual hem depth, for hems (since sheets are labeled with torn rather than the hemmed size). Measure similarly for the width, but leave no allowance for hems. When you shop, choose the closest size you can get to the dimensions you have measured, but favor the larger rather than the smaller size.

Prices are for 81 x 108 inch size unless otherwise noted. All sizes are torn, not hemmed. Types refer to OPA standard types mentioned in text.

### MUSLINS

#### BEST BUYS

The following brands of muslin sheets were judged to offer the best values for the money in the order given.

**Macy's Mayflower** (R. H. Macy & Co., NYC). \$1.96. 81 x 112½ inches. Type 140. Available at Macy's Dep't Store, NYC.

**Savarn** (J. C. Penney Co., NYC). \$1.56. Type 140. This is a "Best Buy" because the sheet was sold as a "second" at a reduced price, and was found to have only slight defects which did not affect wear. But make sure that there

is no damage which will affect wear of the sheet you buy. This brand is a second of Penney's first-quality **Tavern**. Available nationally at J. C. Penney Stores.

### ACCEPTABLE

(In estimated order of quality.)

**Fruit of the Loom Extra Weight** (Fruit of the Loom, Inc., Providence, R. I.). \$2.09. Type 140. Available nationally.

**Lady Pepperell** (Pepperell Mfg. Co., Boston). \$2.09. Type 140. Available nationally.

**Macy's Mayflower** (see "Best Buys").

**Ambassador** (Associated Merchandising Corp., NYC). \$2.19. Available nationally at AMC Stores.<sup>1</sup>

**Utica** (Utica & Mohawk Cotton Mills, Inc., Utica, N. Y.). \$1.99. Type 140. Sheet purchased by CU was found to be a second. Available nationally.

**Pepperell Duchess Service Weight** (Pepperell Mfg. Co.). \$1.94. Type 140. Available nationally.

**Savarn** (see "Best Buys").

**Dwight Anchor** (Nashua Mfg. Co., Nashua, N. H.). \$2.10. Type 140. Available nationally.

<sup>1</sup> The following are AMC stores: Hutzler's, Baltimore; Filene's Boston; R. H. White, Boston; Abraham & Straus, Brooklyn; John Shillito, Cincinnati; Wm. Taylor, Cleveland; Lazarus Co., Columbus, Ohio; Rike-Kumler, Dayton, Ohio; Hudson's, Detroit; L. S. Ayres, Indianapolis; Bullock's, Los Angeles; Burdine's, Miami; Boston Store, Milwaukee; Dayton Co., Minneapolis; Bloomingdale's, NYC; Capwell's, Oakland, Calif.; Strawbridge & Clothier, Philadelphia; Joseph Horne, Pittsburgh; Thalheimer's, Richmond, Va.; Forman's, Rochester, N. Y.; The Emporium, San Francisco; Stix, Baer & Fuller, St. Louis.

### OPA Minimum Standards

Type <sup>1</sup>	Ounces per square yd.	Breaking Strength <sup>2</sup>	Maximum Sizing
180	3.6	60	4%
140	4.6	70	4%
128	4.0	55	6%
112	3.7	45	10%

On all types, selvages must be tape. Plain hems (both ends) must total four inches, and the hemming must have at least 14 stitches to the inch.

<sup>1</sup> This figure represents the total number of threads to the square inch, that is, the sum of the lengthwise and the crosswise threads.

<sup>2</sup> The number of pounds required to tear the fabric apart in a standard test; the minimum in the table is for both directions.



## Muslin Sheets

BRAND & TYPE	PRICE	STATED SIZE (inches)	WEIGHT (ounces per sq. yard)	THREAD COUNT		TENSILE STRENGTH		ABRASION RESISTANCE
				Warp	Filling	Warp	Filling	
Gimbel's Own Greeley Type								
128 .....	\$1.79	81x108	4.24	71	60	58.3	46.3	F
Lady Pepperell Type 140 .....	2.09	81x108	4.65	77	70	75.9	66.6	E
Gimbel's Own Gramercy Type								
140 .....	2.09	81x108	4.69	76	66	73.0	66.2	G
Filene's Own Vendome Type								
128 .....	1.69	81x99	4.37	71	60	74.9	67.5	G
Pacific Mills Truth Type 128..	1.79	81x108	4.35	71	58	60.6	66.1	F
Fruit of the Loom Extra								
Weight Type 140.....	2.09	81x108	4.75	77	69	65.6	76.8	E
Macy's Mayflower Type 140...	1.96	81x112½	4.71	76	70	66.2	75.1	G
Macy's Type 128 .....	1.49	81x108	4.33	73	62	53.1	64.5	G
Ambassador Type 140 .....	2.19	81x108	4.71	76	66	67.4	78.9	E
Utica Type 140 .....	1.99	81x108	4.66	77	65	67.4	76.8	E
Cannon Type 128 .....	1.64	81x108	4.41	70	61	57.1	67.0	F
Pepperell Duchess Service								
Weight Type 140 .....	1.94	81x108	4.60	77	71	75.7	66.2	G
Consul Type 128 .....	1.59	81x99	4.37	71	59	70.6	62.6	F
Dwight Anchor Type 140 ....	2.10	81x108	4.79	76	67	73.7	66.3	G
Fieldcrest Golden Gate Type								
140 .....	2.19	90x108	4.90	75	66	68.9	57.1	G
Pequot Type 140 .....	2.04	81x108	4.56	77	66	69.4	62.0	G
Fieldcrest Wearwell Type 128	1.64	81x108	4.67	72	63	66.1	60.0	F
Savarn Type 140 .....	1.56	81x108	4.90	76	70	74.5	59.9	G

Abrasion Resistance: E=Excellent; G=Good; F=Fair.

Pequot (Pequot Mills, Salem, Mass.). \$2.04. Type 140. Available nationally.  
Fieldcrest Golden Gate (Marshall Field & Co., NYC). \$2.19. 90 x 108 inches. Type 140. Available nationally at some department stores.

Gimbel's Gramercy (Gimbel Bros., NYC). \$2.09. Type 140. Sheet purchased by CU was found to be a second. Available at Gimbel's Dep't Stores in NYC, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Milwaukee.

Filene's Vendome (Filene's Dep't Store, Boston). \$1.69. 81 x 99 inches. Type 128. Available at Filene's, Boston.

Fieldcrest Wearwell (Marshall Field & Co.). \$1.49. 72 x 108 inches. Type 128. Available nationally at some department stores.

Cannon (Cannon Mills, NYC). \$1.64. Type 128. Available nationally.

Gimbel's Greeley (Gimbel Bros.). \$1.59. 81 x 99 inches. Type 128. Available at Gimbel's Dep't Stores in NYC, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Milwaukee.

Consul (Associated Merchandising Corp.). \$1.59. 81 x 99 inches. Type 128. Sheet purchased by CU was found to be a second. Available nationally at AMC Stores. For list of AMC Stores see page 6, footnote.<sup>1</sup>

Macy's (R. H. Macy & Co.). \$1.49. Type 128. Sheet purchased by CU was found to be a second. Available at Macy's Dep't Store, NYC.

Pacific Mills Truth (Pacific Mills, NYC). \$1.79. Type 128. Sheet purchased by

CU was found to be a second. Available nationally.

### PERCALES BEST BUYS

*The following brands of percale sheets were judged to offer the best values for the money in the order given.*

Supre-Macy (R. H. Macy & Co.). \$2.88. Percale. Available at Macy's Dep't Store, NYC.

Pepperell Princess (Pepperell Mfg. Co.). \$2.69. 81 x 99 inches. Percale. Available nationally.

Pepperell Peeress (Pepperell Mfg. Co.). \$3.70. Percale. Available nationally.

Macy's Percale (R. H. Macy & Co.). \$1.98. Type 180. Available at Macy's Dep't Store.

Fieldcrest Duracale (Marshall Field & Co.). \$2.14. Type 180. Available nationally at some department stores.

Pequot (Pequot Mills, Salem, Mass.). \$2.49. 90 x 108 inches. Type 180. Available nationally.

Pepperell Percale (Pepperell Mfg. Co.). \$2.19. Type 180. Available nationally.

### ACCEPTABLE

*(In estimated order of quality.)*

Utica (Utica & Mohawk Cotton Mills). \$4.10. Percale. Available nationally.

Gimbel's Greymoor (Gimbel Bros.). \$4.50. 90 x 108 inches. Percale. Sheet

purchased by CU was found to be a second. Available at Gimbel's Dep't Stores in NYC, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Milwaukee.

Pepperell Peeress (see "Best Buys").

Pepperell Princess (see "Best Buys").

Supre-Macy (see "Best Buys").

Regent (Associated Merchandising Corp.). \$4.15. Percale. Available nationally in AMC Stores. For list of AMC Stores see page 6 footnote<sup>1</sup>.

Macy's Percale (see "Best Buys").

Wamsutta Supercal (Wamsutta Mills, New Bedford, Mass.). \$5.75. 90 x 108 inches. Percale. Available nationally.

Cannon Lavenlawn (Cannon Mills). \$4.10. Percale. Available nationally.

Filene's De Luxe (Filene's Dep't Store). \$3.95. Percale. Sheet purchased by CU was found to be a second. Available at Filene's, Boston.

Fieldcrest Duracale (see "Best Buys").

Pequot (see "Best Buys").

Indian Maiden (Nashua Mfg. Co.). \$2.80. 90 x 108. Type 180. Available nationally.

Pacific (Pacific Mills). \$2.09. Type 180. Available nationally.

Aimcee (Associated Merchandising Corp.). \$2.09. Type 180. Available at AMC Stores. For a list of AMC Stores see page 6 footnote<sup>1</sup>.

Cannon Cavalier (Cannon Mills). \$2.39. Type 180. Available nationally.

Filene's Empress (Filene's Dep't Store). \$1.99. Type 180. Sheet purchased by CU was found to be a second. Available at Filene's, Boston.

Gimbel's Gabrielle (Gimbel Bros.). \$2.39. Type 180. Sheet purchased by CU was found to be a second. Available at Gimbel's Dep't Stores in NYC, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Milwaukee.

## Watch for...

Work on the following reports, among others, is either now under way or scheduled to begin soon:

Canned Meats

Floor Waxes

Men's Broadcloth Shirts

Work Shirts

Dehydrated Foods

Aluminum Cleaners



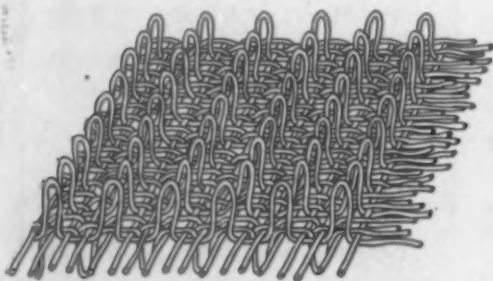
# BATH TOWELS

There have been many changes both in price and quality of bath towels during the war years, and finding a combination of good quality and reasonable price is difficult

Army requirements and production difficulties—particularly lack of mill manpower—have made many changes in the towel picture. The accent is now, as it should be, on service rather than on style.

In the four consecutive years that CU has tested bath towels, many changes in price and quality of various brands have occurred and this is especially true since the war. While the 1944 selection isn't very different in quality from last year's offerings, seven of the 15 brands tested last year and retested this year, showed price increases of from 5¢ to 16¢ a towel.

Take the *Fieldcrest* brand, for instance. In 1942, the price of the towel CU tested remained the same as in 1941, and its quality had improved. In 1943, quality deteriorated



Turkish towels are made with a special weave, in which the regular warp thread is alternated with a looped warp, as shown in the diagram above. This improves absorption without detracting from the strength of the fabric.

while price remained the same. This year, the quality is similar to last year's but price has gone up 15¢. In other words, you now have to pay 15¢ more for a towel similar to the one purchased in 1941—a 30% increase in price.

However, you still can get a good towel at a fair price. *AMC Ambassador*, though it has risen substantially in price since 1941, is still a "Best Buy" compared with other brands of similar quality; and *Sears Morning Glow* Cat. No.—8060M, which went from 35¢<sup>1</sup> in 1942 to 47¢<sup>1</sup> in 1943, but improved in quality, has maintained both its quality and price this year and rates as a "Best Buy," too.

A good towel should do two things: dry one well and wear well. To do a good drying job, it must be soft and fluffy; to wear well, it must have strong yarns, well woven. Long-staple cotton yarns should be used and just the right amount of twist is required. A hard, tight twist will be long-wearing but poor in absorption. A soft, loose twist will absorb well but will not last long. Just the right balance must be struck.

## WEAVE

To give greater absorbing power while maintaining maximum strength, a special weave known as *terry* is used. This is a plain weave, but whereas the average plain weave has only two sets of yarns or threads—one set of warp (lengthwise) threads interlaced with the filling (crosswise) threads—terry cloth has three sets. It is woven on special looms and the extra set of warp yarns forms loops (the "pile") on each side of the towel during the weaving process, while the other or "ground" warp intertwines with the filling to act as a binder and contribute to the basic weave (see cut, above). In general, the number of loops per square inch of towel surface determines the absorbency of the towel, while the number and type of the base weave or binder threads determine lasting power. A well-balanced towel should have the same number of warp yarns used for

<sup>1</sup> Plus postage

Here CU presents brand ratings based on laboratory tests of twenty popular brands of Turkish towels, with some suggestions on how to buy and what to look for when you shop

loops as for binder.

In addition, the warp yarns used as binder should be strong, and better towels have these warp yarns *plied*, that is, two threads are twisted together to form a single two-ply yarn. In like manner, the warp yarns used to form loops can be made of two-ply yarns.

The size of the loops, the twist of the yarn, the quality of the cotton used and many other considerations, affect, in one way or another, the all-round quality and efficiency of a towel. Unfortunately, these things can be judged only by laboratory

## HOW TO SAVE

**\$1.62**

If you're in the market for towels, we need hardly tell you that you've quite a job on your hands.

Not only have many brands disappeared from the stores, but large numbers of those still left have increased enormously in price. Maybe you've never thought of buying towels from a mail order house, but CU's tests show that it may be a good idea, this year, provided you know which mail order towel to buy. Don't get *Sears Morning Glow* Cat. No.—8047M, for instance; it's "Not Acceptable" even at the low price of 39¢. But *Sears Morning Glow* Cat. No.—8060M at 47¢ is an excellent value, CU's tests show. Buy a half dozen of these rather than, say, *Martex* at 74¢, and you save \$1.62.

Though that may not seem to be a great deal, taken all by itself, CU members know that there are many such savings—large and small—that careful use of the Reports can make for them in the course of the year.

tests. There are, however, many points on which you can and should check to get the most for your towel money.

#### HOW TO JUDGE A TOWEL

To get some idea of the *balance and closeness of the weave*, make the "pinhole test." While still at the towel counter, hold the towel up to a strong light. If only tiny pinpoints of light come through, the weave is probably a balanced one; if much light comes through or if it comes through in splotches or gaps, the weave is either uneven, or loose or both.

To check on the *pile*, examine it for thickness and abundance. Then crush the towel in the hand to see if it just looks thick or actually is thick. Check on the *loops*, too. They should be dense and of even height. If they stick out, they'll probably catch and pull out in the laundering. Pull gently on them. They should not come loose easily. Remember that the main job of the terry loops or pile is to absorb moisture, but they also have a bearing on the strength of the towel. If the loops are scanty, uneven in length, or poorly anchored to the base weave, the towel will not wear well. Whether the loops are made of single or double thread has no bearing on the wear. Bear in mind that double loops often are used on inexpensive terry towels to make them appear heavier. By inserting a hairpin or other pointed object into a loop of the towel, you can easily see whether the thread is single or double.

Because of the great strain put on the *selvage*, check the edges for firmness and close weave. At selvage edges the filling yarn reverses its direction, weaving itself through the warp yarns. The warp threads should be closer together in this area. Selvage strength is very important. When a towel is stretched across the shoulder or back, all the pull and tug is in this lengthwise direction.

Cheaper towels are sometimes woven to twice the width desired, with a strip of plain woven fabric (not terry) in the middle. This plain fabric is then cut down the center so that two towels are made from one piece; raw edges are folded over and sewn. Regardless of how good it is, such a hem is never as strong as a selvage.

Never let the *weight* of a towel mislead you. Heavier weight means longer wear only when it is due to a firm base weave and a dense, even pile. A light-weight towel with a high thread count (allowing even pinpoints of light to come through) will last longer than a heavier-weight towel with a lower thread count. The latter may even indicate an unbalanced weave, strong in pile but weak in underweave.

#### HOW CU TESTED

The warp tensile strength, thread count, number of loops per square inch and absorptive power are the most important properties of a towel. The first and second of these determine how long your towel will wear, while the other two determine drying ability. All these features were given special consideration in CU's ratings. Filling, tensile strength, weight, shrinkage and special construction features, such as two-ply yarns, were also carefully weighed in the final ratings. Brands which were smaller than marked size, or shrank excessively, were marked down in the ratings; since these shortcomings do not, however, seriously affect the usefulness of the towel, these brands were not considered "Not Acceptable."

The best towel values, as well as the greatest volume of sales, are in the medium price range—that is, from about 45¢ to 90¢ for a 22 x 44-inch towel. CU therefore purchased its test towels in this price range,

even though the towel market goes above and below it.

Towels selling below 45¢ usually have small and insufficient loops, weak base weaves, one side hemmed instead of selvaged, or a combination of poor towel characteristics.

Towels which sell above 90¢ usually have more loops, firmly anchored in the base weave, and a compact, strong selvage. But they are in the "luxury" class and are not good buys if you are concerned mainly with economy. Monograms, color and fancy designs are other features of high-priced towels which, while they add style, offer nothing in the way of a better towel.

#### COLORED TOWELS

The addition of color, whether solid, in bands or in designs, increases the cost of production, since extra time, labor and dye-stuff must be used. Because of the shortage of manpower and dyes, good quality colored towels are coming off the looms in limited quantities only, but fairly good color assortments can still be found.

In some cases, a colored towel will have less absorptive power than a similar white towel, because the dye takes up part of the fabric's absorptive capacity. If you buy colored towels, make sure that you get a guarantee of colorfastness to the type of washing your towels receive. And beware of washing instructions which call for lukewarm water; that's a sure sign that the manufacturer is lukewarm about the colorfastness of that particular towel!

## Do you know.....

that terry towels are 3,944 years old? Of course, the first terry cloth found in Egyptian tombs in 2000 B.C. didn't have the luxury pile we know today. They were made of natural linen instead of cotton and the loops covered one side only.

## And do you know....

why terry towels are called Turkish? You see, it's like this: Back in 1854, an English mill man "discovered" the terry weave but, lacking our modern machines, it took him two years to turn out a shipload of terry cloth. People were skeptical, however, and he could find no market for his terry cloth in England. So, in despair, he shipped it off to Turkey, where it was used for turbans. By 1869, it was back in England by way of English importers who thought it was a Turkish product and called it Turkish cloth or Turkish toweling.



All of the towels tested by CU were white, with or without colored borders. A few had fancy designs in the weave, which excluded loops and therefore lowered absorption. Two towels of each brand listed were tested.

### BEST BUYS

The following brands of towels are judged to offer the best value for the money in the order given.

**AMC Ambassador Super-Selvage** (Associated Merchandising Corp., NYC). 59¢. 22x44. Single-loop towel with a 2-ply binder after each loop. Available nationally in AMC stores. For a list of AMC stores see page 6 footnote<sup>1</sup>.

**Sears Morning Glow Launderite Cat. No.—8060M** (Sears-Roebuck). 47¢ plus postage. 22x44. Single-loop towel with 1-ply binder after each loop. Available by mail order from Sears-Roebuck.

**Gimbel's Toughie** (Gimbel Bros., NYC). 79¢. 24x46. Single-loop towel with a 2-ply binder after each loop. Price for large-size towel makes it a "Best Buy." Available at Gimbel Bros. Dep't Stores, NYC, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee and Philadelphia.

### ACCEPTABLE

(In estimated order of quality)

**AMC Regent** (Associated Merchandising Corp.). 79¢. 22x44. Single-loop towel with a 2-ply binder after each loop. Available nationally at AMC stores. For a list of AMC stores see page 6 footnote<sup>1</sup>.

**AMC Ambassador** (see "Best Buys").  
**Fieldcrest** (Marshall Field and Co.,

NYC). 75¢. 22x44. Single-loop towel with a 2-ply binder after each loop. A different towel, and better quality than towel listed below for 65¢. Available nationally in some department stores.

**Gimbel's Toughie** (see "Best Buys").

**Gimbel's Gabrielle** (Gimbel Bros.). 79¢. 22x44. Single-loop towel with a 2-ply binder after each loop. Available at Gimbel Bros. Dep't Stores, NYC, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee and Philadelphia.

**Callaway** (Callaway Mills, La Grange, Ga.). 89¢. 22x44. Single-loop towel with a 2-ply binder after each loop. Fancy design eliminates loops in design area. Available nationally.

**Sears Morning Glow Launderite Cat. No.—8060M** (see "Best Buys").

**Hale Bros. Iron Thread** (Hale Bros., San Francisco). 65¢. 22x44. Single-loop towel with a 2-ply binder after each loop. Available at Hale Bros. Dep't Store, San Francisco.

**Dundee** (Georgia Kincaid Mills, Griffin, Ga.). 69¢. 22x44. Single-loop towel with a 2-ply binder after each loop. Available nationally.

**Haynes** (Cliffside Mills, Inc., Cliffside, N. C.). 69¢. 22x44. Single-loop towel with a 2-ply binder after each loop. Available nationally.

**Macy's Mayflower** (R. H. Macy and Co., NYC). 64¢. 24x48. Single-loop towel with a 2-ply binder after each loop. Available at Macy's Dep't Store, NYC.

**Moor** (Mooresville Cotton Mills, Mooresville, N. C.). 50¢. 24x46. Single-loop towel with a 1-ply binder after each loop. Available nationally.

**Cannon** (Cannon Mills Inc., NYC). 54¢. 22x44. Double-loop towel with a 1-ply binder after each set of two loops. Available nationally.

**Martex** (Wellington Sears Co., NYC). 74¢. 22x44. Single-loop towel with a 2-ply binder after each loop. Available nationally.

**Sears Morning Glow Cat. No.—8225M** (Sears-Roebuck). 54¢ plus postage. 22x44. Single-loop towel with a 1-ply binder after each loop. Available by mail order from Sears-Roebuck.

**CD** (Cooperative Distributors, Inc., NYC). 55¢ plus postage. 22x44. Double-loop towel with a 2-ply binder after each set of two loops. Available by mail order or directly from Cooperative Distributors, 13 Astor Place, NYC.

**Fieldcrest** (Marshall Field and Co.). 65¢. 22x44. Single-loop towel with a 1-ply binder after each loop. Not the same towel as listed above. Available nationally at some department stores.

**Muscogee** (Muscogee Mfg. Co., Columbus, Ga.). 39¢. 22x44. Single-loop towel with a 1-ply binder after each loop. Available nationally.

**Ward's Cat. No.—9682C** (Montgomery Ward). 35¢ plus postage. 22x44. Single-loop towel with a 1-ply binder

after each loop. Available by mail order from Montgomery Ward.

### NOT ACCEPTABLE

**Sears Morning Glow Cat. No.—8047M** (Sears-Roebuck). 39¢ plus postage. 22x44. Double-loop towel with a 1-ply binder after each set of two loops. Fancy design eliminates loops in design area. Towel made with selvage on top and bottom with hemmed sides. Cheap construction which lowers durability. Available by mail order from Sears-Roebuck.

## The 1944 Buying Guide

*Consumers Union regrets that manpower problems of the printing and binding industry have delayed the completion of the 1944 Buying Guide. Every effort is being made to get the job out as quickly as possible, however, and copies will be sent to members as soon as they are received from the binding plant.*

## CONSUMERS UNION

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☐ Renew my subscription for one year and send me Bread & Butter to run concurrently with the Reports.

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NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

1CU





# Scouring Powders

Many a housewife who is careful to use one soap for her stockings and another for her husband's work clothes; who wouldn't think of dusting her polished furniture with a coarse, rough cloth, does use the same scouring powder to remove the ring around the tub that she uses to clean the iron pot in which she burned the roast. If it happens to be a scouring powder made with a mild abrasive, her bathtub is relatively safe from scratching, but she may not get very far on the iron pot. If the powder is harsh, the pot won't be so hard to clean, but she may do permanent damage to the bathtub.

The abrasive in a scouring powder may constitute as much as 95% of the finished product. Some of the abrasive substances commonly used (in approximate order of abrasiveness) are talc, diatomaceous earth, whiting, clay, powdered marble, chalk, pumice, feldspar and silica. These may be used singly or in combination with one another. Feldspar is most commonly used because it is cheap and effective for rough kitchen work, where scratching of

... differ, and what's safe for scrubbing tile floors may be disastrous to aluminumware. In tests of 35 brands, CU found great variations; this article tells which brands to use for each purpose

the surface to be cleaned is unimportant. Unfortunately, the user of scouring powder has no assurance that the composition of any given brand will remain constant over a long period, as some manufacturers change the composition of their products as the prices of the materials used fluctuate.

## ABRASIVES

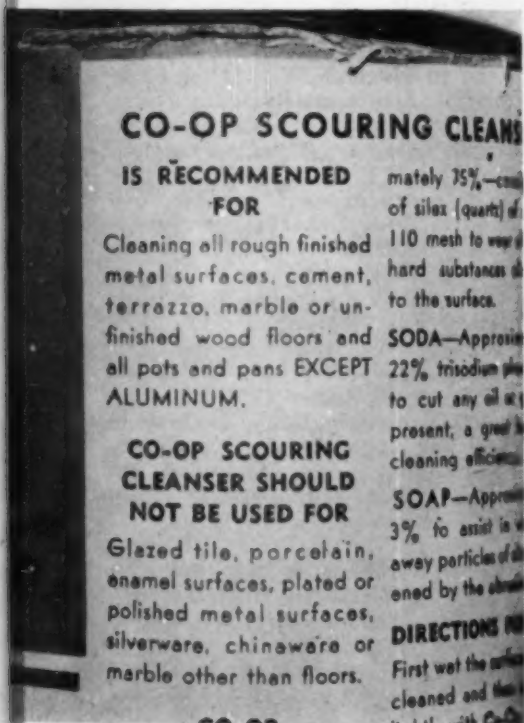
Of the 35 brands tested by CU the labels of only three brands of scouring powder indicated the abrasives used—"seisnotite" (pumice) in *Old Dutch*, "silex" (a silica abrasive) in *Co-op Red Label*, and whiting in *Co-op Non-Scratch*. Most labels are actually misleading, in recommending use of the product as a "clean-all" for everything including chromium, brass and copper (which should never be scoured); aluminum, enamel and porcelain (which should be scoured only with the mildest abrasives); and floor tiles or ironware (which can take harsh abrasives). A flagrant example of such false claims is found on the label of *Old Dutch Cleanser* which, it is claimed, "... is especially suited for cleaning ... a wide range of articles, a few of which are listed. . . ." The "few" items—46 of them—include false teeth, monel metal, painted furniture, and others which are safely cleaned only with non-abrasive cleaners.

With steel wool practically off the market, many manufacturers have added aluminum to the long list of items which their product will clean and polish. Actually, aluminum can be safely cleaned only with mild scouring powder and even these should be used carefully, as prolonged contact with alkali is harmful to aluminum. Whiting—which can be purchased in paint stores—rubbed

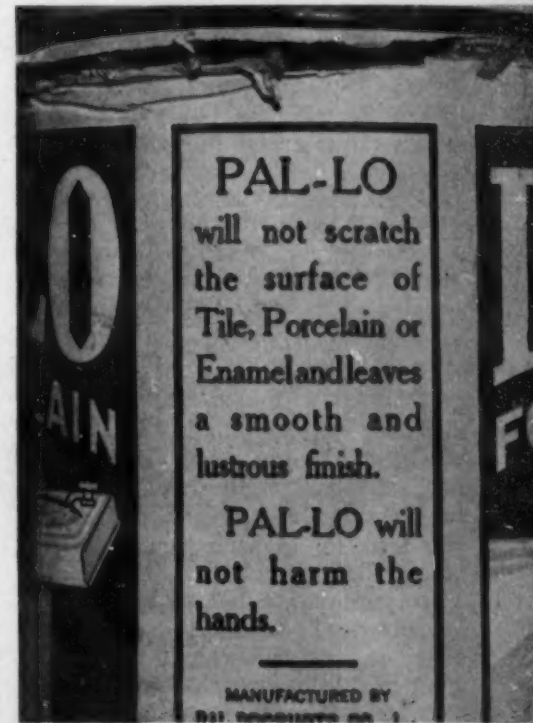
on with a damp cloth, will usually remove stains. However, if the stains are stubborn, lemon juice or vinegar will help remove them.

Scouring powder cleans by a double action: the mechanical action of the abrasive, and the chemical action of the soap or other detergent. If the abrasive is harsh, it will not only scrape off the dirt, but also some of the metal from the pot or some of the finish from the porcelain or enamel; it will not only remove Junior's fingerprints from the wall, but some of the paint as well. Brands which have a high content of non-abrasive cleanser (see ratings) are particularly useful for cleaning greasy surfaces.

Actually the process of polishing metals consists of making very fine scratches—with very fine abrasives—on the surface. But if the abrasive is too harsh, or if any abrasive is used on surfaces like enamel, porcelain or glass, the surface becomes roughened and thus collects dirt more easily. This, in turn, makes more and more scouring necessary, and so the vicious circle continues.



AN HONEST LABEL, like the one above, tells the limitations as well as the uses of a coarse scouring powder.



FALSE & MISLEADING is the label above, for the coarse powder in the box, used as directed, would ruin many surfaces.

It is best not to use scouring powder on porcelain enamel sinks (when tapped lightly with a spoon, porcelain gives a click; enamelled iron gives a metallic ring.), wash bowls or bath tubs, as the alkali in most scouring powders is detrimental to this finish. If soap and water do not remove stains or discolorations from porcelain enamel, a little kerosene, baking soda or fine whiting, rubbed with a soft cloth, or a detergent like calgon (sodium metaphosphate) will probably do the trick. If you must use a scouring powder, use one that is acid (such as Zud) on kitchen or bathroom fixtures which you know to be made of porcelain enamel.

Most kitchen sinks, however, are made of enamelled iron, which is not harmed by mildly abrasive alkaline scouring powders.

Practically all scouring powders today are packed in paper boxes rather than the boxes with metal ends formerly used. Since scouring powder boxes are often handled with wet hands and generally kept near the damp edges of sinks and tubs, the powder is likely to get wet and become caked. It may be a good investment, therefore, to get a plastic container to hold the boxes. Or you can empty the contents into a metal-covered glass jar, with holes punched in the cover.

Prices varied considerably in the 35 brands of scouring powders included in CU's tests, ranging from 3.4¢ to 17.3¢ per pound of dry powder. Though the cheapest was a harsh powder and the most expensive a mild one, as the ratings show, it is not necessary to pay high prices for mildness.

#### HOW CU TESTED

CU's laboratory tests included determination of abrasive action, moisture content, acidity or alkalinity and content of non-abrasive cleanser.

In the ratings, brands are grouped according to the abrasive action—mild, moderate and harsh.

After much investigation of various tests for abrasive action, it was finally decided to do the tests in a manner similar to that in which scouring powder is normally used, except that the material scoured with soft glass. A measured amount of the powder was placed on a damp cloth, and the rubbing was done by hand, with the same number of rubs on each sample. Tests were made

on three different glass slides for each brand, and the results were classified independently by three different observers. A high degree of consistency was found, both in the three slides used and among the independent observers.

The moisture content indicated the dry weight and the cost per pound of the dry powder. "Non-abrasive cleanser" consists of soap or builder (non-soap detergents) or combinations of the two. The percentages given in the ratings are calculated on the dry weight of the powders. All the powders rated below were alkaline.

All brands are "Acceptable," but only provided the use of those listed as "harsh" is confined to surfaces such as floor tiles and heavy kitchenware, which can stand the rough treatment.

#### ACCEPTABLE

*In order of increasing cost per dry pound within each group. Figures in parentheses represent cost per pound dry weight. Brands near the top of each group represent "Best Buys" within that group.*

#### MILD

**Wards Scouring Cleanser, Lemon Odor,** Cat. No.—2964 (Montgomery Ward). 21¢ plus postage for six 14-oz. packages (4.1¢). Approximately 12% non-abrasive cleanser. Available by mail order from Montgomery Ward.

**Co-op Scouring Cleanser, Blue Label** (National Cooperatives, Inc., Chicago). 5¢ for 14 oz. (5.7¢). Approximately 6½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally at Co-op stores.

**Crystal White** (Colgate-Palmolive-Peet Co., Jersey City, N. J.). 5¢ for 13 oz. (6.3¢). Approximately 4% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

**Sunbrite Cleanser** (Swift & Co., Chicago). 5¢ for 13 oz. (6.4¢). Approximately 8% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

**Kitchen Klenzer** (FitzPatrick Bros., Chicago). 8¢ for 13 oz. (10.5¢). Approximately 23% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

**Co-op Non-Scratch Porcelain Cleanser** (Eastern Cooperative Wholesale, Inc., NYC). 10¢ for 15 oz. (11.2¢). Approximately 9½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available in the East in Co-op stores.

**Scotch Triple Action** (Los Angeles Soap Co., Los Angeles). 10¢ for 14 oz. (11.8¢). Approximately 28% non-abrasive cleanser. Available on West Coast.

**Old Dutch Cleanser** (Cudahy Soap Works, Chicago). 10¢ for 14 oz. (12.2¢). Approximately 14½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

**Bon Ami, deluxe** (Bon Ami Co., NYC). 18¢ for 1 lb. 3 oz. (15.1¢). Approximately 5½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

**Bab-O** (B. T. Babbitt, Inc., NYC). 13¢ for 14 oz. (16.1¢). Approximately 14% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

**Bon Ami** (Bon Ami Co.). 13¢ for 12 oz. (17.3¢). Approximately 5½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

#### MODERATE

**Holly "The Best Maid"** (B. T. Babbitt-Holly Prod. Corp., Vernon, Calif.). 4¢ for 13 oz. (5.1¢). Approximately 9½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available on West Coast.

**Palco Cleanser for the Kitchen** (Pal Products Corp., Brooklyn, N. Y.). 5¢ for 14 oz. (5.7¢). Approximately 2½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available in New York, Philadelphia and New England.

**Gold Dust Scouring Cleanser** (Lever Bros., Cambridge, Mass.). 5¢ for 14 oz. (5.8¢). Approximately 11½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

**Lighthouse Cleanser with Lemon Odor** (Armour & Co., Chicago). 5¢ for 14 oz. (5.8¢). Approximately 10½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

**Red & White Lemon Odor Cleanser** (Red & White Corp., Chicago). 5¢ for 14 oz. (5.8¢). Approximately 5½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally in Red & White Stores.

**IGA Cleanser with Lemon Odor** (Independent Grocers' Alliance Distrib. Co., Chicago). 5¢ for 14 oz. (5.8¢). Approximately 6½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally in IGA Stores.

**Kirkman Cleanser** (Colgate-Palmolive-Peet, Brooklyn, N. Y.). 5¢ for 14 oz. (5.9¢). Approximately 5½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

**Octagon Cleanser** (Colgate-Palmolive-Peet, Jersey City, N. J.). 5¢ for 13 oz. (6.2¢). Approximately 3½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

**Brite-Ize Cleanser** (Barnes-Noble Co., Ottawa, Ill.). 7¢ for 14 oz. (8.2¢). Approximately 9% non-abrasive cleanser. Available in Midwest.

**Wyandotte** (Wyandotte Chemical Corp., Wyandotte, Mich.). 8¢ for 15 oz. (8.5¢). Approximately 5½% non-abrasive cleanser. Probably available in East and Midwest.

**Cameo** (Cameo Corp., Chicago). 8¢ for 14 oz. (9.4¢). Approximately 10½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

**RoKoH** (I. Rokeach & Sons, Brooklyn, N. Y.). 8¢ for 14 oz. (10¢). Approximately 11½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

**Sapolio Powder** (Enoch Morgan's Sons Co., NYC). 9¢ for 13 oz. (11.2¢). Approximately 5% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

**House-Brite Powdered Polish** (Bloomingtondale, NYC). 10¢ for 14 oz. (11.5¢).



Approximately 5% non-abrasive cleanser. Available at Bloomingdale's Dep't Store, NYC.

Porcela (Porcela-Radax Co., Pittsburgh). 11¢ for 14 oz. (12.6¢). Approximately 2½% non-abrasive cleanser. Probably available nationally.

## HARSH

White Sail Cleanser (A&P, NYC). 3¢ for 14 oz. (3.4¢). Approximately 1½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally at A&P stores.

Blue Label Cleanser (Blue Label Distributors). 3¢ for 12 oz. (4.1¢). Approximately 2% non-abrasive cleanser. Purchased in Minneapolis.

Hazel Brand Household Cleanser (National Tea Co., Chicago). 4¢ for 14 oz. (4.6¢). Approximately 2½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available at National Tea Stores.

Royal Lemon Cleanser (Royal Lemon, Inc., Minneapolis). 4¢ for 14 oz. (4.7¢). Approximately 3% non-abrasive cleanser. Available in Midwest.

Babbitt's Cleanser (B. T. Babbitt, Inc., NYC). 5¢ for 14 oz. (5.8¢). Approximately 5½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

Macy's Scouring Powder (R. H. Macy & Co., NYC). 6¢ for 14 oz. (7¢). Approximately 13% non-abrasive cleanser. Available in Macy's Dep't Store, NYC.

Co-op Red Label (Eastern Cooperative Wholesale, NYC). 8¢ for 14 oz. (9.7¢). Approximately 12½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available in the East in Co-op Stores.

Pal-lo for Porcelain (Pal Products Co., Brooklyn, N. Y.). 10¢ for 14 oz. (11.6¢). Approximately 1½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available in New York, Philadelphia and New England.

Dexta (A. S. Boyle Co., Jersey City, N. J.). 10¢ for 12 oz. (13.5¢). Approximately 13½% non-abrasive cleanser. Available nationally.

## Corrections

In the November 1943 *Reports*, in the article on maps, it was erroneously stated that a map scaled four inches to the foot would be needed to follow detailed military operations in Sicily, and its corresponding globe would be 150 feet in diameter. Actually, a scale of one inch to four miles would result in a globe this size.

In the *Reports*, September 1943 article on cereals, *Pep* was listed as a part-bran cereal. At the time samples were purchased for test, *Pep* did contain 30% bran and 70% whole wheat, but it has since been changed to contain whole wheat only.

# Dictionaries

A discussion of the types available, with ratings of leading titles priced from 90c to \$135; plus advice on what to look for when buying a dictionary

The kind of dictionary you buy should depend on how you're going to use it. If you're curious about words, want to know their origins and various uses, you may want a big, unabridged dictionary; if you belong to the "consult when in doubt" school, you'll probably be satisfied with a smaller dictionary giving usual meanings, spellings and pronunciations; if you're a crossword puzzle fan, you'll probably want a dictionary which includes slang, synonyms and antonyms and encyclopedic matter ranging from common birds of America to chief foreign alphabets.

The scope of dictionaries available is just about as wide as the types of users. There are dictionaries for pre-school children, school editions, desk and home dictionaries, pocket editions and dictionaries for students in specialized fields.

Examine closely any dictionary bearing the name "Webster" in its title. The bona fide *Webster*, which maintains the standards of the early editions, is now being published by G.&C. Merriam only. Unauthorized "Webster's," based on expired copyrights, must bear the statement, "This dictionary is not published by the original publishers of the Webster's dictionaries or by their successors." And that's your cue to lay that "Webster" down!

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Don't be too much impressed by the volume of supplementary information contained in the dictionary. The function of dictionaries is to give information about words. Many dictionaries also include biographical and geographical lists, population figures, tables of weights and measures, etc. Since this supplementary material may affect the price of the dictionary, examine it critically. If you already have such material in some other book or encyclopedia at home, or don't particularly want it, buy the edition that sticks to the

words. Publishers have thought of that point, too, and many have put out several editions having identical vocabulary content but with varying amounts of other material included. An example is the *Funk & Wagnalls New Standard*, which is sold in two editions. The regular edition, which is unquestionably an excellent work, sells for \$20. The other edition with "A Standard History of the World," has an added 142 pages of historical chronology and sells for \$34.50. It would be badly overpriced even if the historical supplement were excellent—which it isn't.

**THE NUMBER OF WORDS** a dictionary defines is important, of course. But don't judge a dictionary solely on the number of words or entries claimed for it. Some publishers count in the number of derivatives of main words; other don't figure derivatives in the total.

**EASE OF USE** varies greatly with different dictionaries. There are several things to consider in this connection:

**THE TYPE FACE** used is often overlooked at the time of purchase, yet a dictionary which has hard-to-read type discourages frequent reference. While all except the elementary dictionaries use a rather small type in order to get as much material as possible within reasonable space, there are some which have sacrificed legibility in so doing. Make sure that the dictionary you select has clear, legible type, which you can read without eyestrain.

**OTHER FACTORS** affecting legibility are the *column width* and the *quality of the paper* used. It is easier to read small type when the columns are comparatively narrow. Dictionaries are often printed on rather thin paper for the sake of compactness. But there are many grades of thin paper,



with varying degrees of transparency. When you're examining dictionaries, see that the print on the reverse of the page doesn't show through.

**ILLUSTRATIONS** can be of considerable importance. Though profuse illustration is not necessary, most people will find some carefully selected illustration useful. For example, a picture of a Doric column can show more clearly than a thousand words just what this type of Greek architecture is.

**A THUMB INDEX**, while not essential, may be useful. Often the same dictionary is available with or without this feature; it may or may not be worth the extra cost to you.

**THE PHYSICAL SIZE** of a dictionary may be a deterrent to use, unless you make special provision for it. The bulky *Webster's Unabridged* is likely to spend much of its life unopened on the bottom shelf of your bookcase, if that's where you keep it. For, stored in that way, it takes a very strong curiosity about a word to impel you to pull the book out and lift it to a table. If you buy such a large dictionary, you may find it worthwhile to invest in a dictionary stand, so that the book is always available for quick reference. Or if you don't buy a stand, try to keep the dictionary out on a table where it can be consulted easily.

**THE BINDING** of a dictionary may largely determine its price; there is as much as \$10 variation in the price of the same book between different covers. The cheapest binding—usually cloth—will stand all the wear and tear these books will get in ordinary home use, though those who value handsome books may consider the extra dollars well spent.

#### TYPES OF DICTIONARIES

Unquestionably leading the field among dictionaries of the English language is the monumental *Oxford English Dictionary* (\$135), a 13-volume work containing virtually all the words now in use or known to have been used since 1150. The *Oxford* is invaluable for specialists and a pleasure to anyone who enjoys studying words, but hardly a necessity for the average home.

An American work, more or less comparable in scope to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is now in preparation. This *Dictionary of American*

*English*, which will probably be ready within the next year or two, is intended to accomplish for American English what the *Oxford* does for British English.

The outstanding standard unabridged dictionaries are *Webster's New International* (\$22.50) and *Funk & Wagnalls New Standard* (\$20). *Webster's New International* is characterized by the thorough and scholarly work of authorities in various fields. It continues to maintain a conservative policy with regard to spelling innovations, but it is reliable and reasonably up-to-date. Definitions of words which have changed in meaning over a period of time are given in historical order. Less frequently used words, foreign words, and abbreviations are listed on the lower section of each page, in a separate alphabet. *Funk & Wagnalls New Standard*, on the other hand, is very liberal in the matter of adopting simplified spelling, and lists all the words and proper nouns in one alphabet, so that the divided page is unnecessary. It is superior to *Webster* in the number and sources of illustrative quotations supplied, but its etymologies are less thorough, and the definitions briefer and less exact. There has been no complete revision of *Funk & Wagnalls* since 1913, so that information about persons, places, and new terms in science, literature and slang is incomplete.

#### ABRIDGED DICTIONARIES

The *New Century* (\$15 for two volumes) is the most generally useful among the large abridged dictionaries. Less expensive than the unabridged works, it provides a sufficiently complete dictionary for most uses.

Among the abridged dictionaries, which are adequate for most office and home use, the following are particularly good: *Webster's Collegiate* (\$3.50 to \$8.75) and *Funk & Wagnalls College Standard* (\$3.50 to \$7.50), each based on its parent unabridged work; *Macmillan's Modern* (\$1.80) distinguished by its excellent format and recent publication; and Winston's five titles in this class—*Advanced*, *College*, *Practical* and *Encyclopedic*—all identical in dictionary content, but ranging in price from \$2.80 to \$10, depending on the amount of encyclopedic information contained.

Excellent dictionaries for high

school students are *Webster's Student's Dictionary* (\$2.60 to \$2.84), *Funk & Wagnalls New Comprehensive Standard School Dictionary* (\$2.50), and the *Thorndike-Century Senior Dictionary* (\$2.72). These works for young people omit many of the obsolete words, shorten the explanations of word origins and simplify the definitions and illustrative sentences. They are, nevertheless, authoritative and accurate. They are of value, too, for persons learning the English language.

In the field of dictionaries for children, E. L. Thorndike issued a pioneer work in 1935, the *Thorndike-Century Junior Dictionary* (\$1.48), which is written for children in words they can understand, rather than condensed from an adult work. *Webster's Dictionary for Boys and Girls* (\$1.36), also for children, is more formal than the *Thorndike*, but is well-arranged and contains clear, simple definitions.

An experimental venture in word-books is the *Picture Dictionary for Children* (\$1.50 to \$2), planned for pre-school and primary school youngsters through the third grade. Intended to introduce words, it presents each in type, script and hand print, with sentences using the word, its plural, tenses or comparative forms, and many simple line illustrations.

Though pocket dictionaries cannot take the place of more comprehensive dictionaries, they are simple in arrangement and definition, and they are very convenient to carry about.

#### SPECIAL DICTIONARIES

For the specialist, there are dictionaries of philosophy, religion, commerce, the technical fields, medicine, gardening, etc. Two of particular interest are Jones' *An English Pronouncing Dictionary*, which specializes in phonetic pronunciation and *Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* which is a scholarly work showing the origins of words.

Other valuable word-books are Partridge's *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, Walker's *Rhyming Dictionary*, Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (a valuable and readable book, indicating preferred usages), Roget's *Thesaurus* (listing synonyms and antonyms), *Dictionary of Basic English* (defining some 33,000 words in terms of the 800-word basic English

vocabulary), and, of course, numerous bilingual dictionaries.

Since several of the works listed as "Not Acceptable" have titles confusingly similar to those of recommended works, CU suggests that you either take this report with you when you shop, or carefully copy the exact titles of dictionaries listed that seem to fill your needs.

## ACCEPTABLE

### UNABRIDGED

**Webster's New International Dictionary** of the English Language (G. & C. Merriam Co., Springfield, Mass.). \$22.50 for one volume containing 600,000 entries. Revised 1934, with new words added, 1939. Type distinct, on good paper. The work of some of the most distinguished scholars in nearly every field of human activity, this dictionary is thorough and scholarly, up-to-date and accurate. Less frequently-used words, foreign words and phrases and abbreviations are found on the lower section of each page, in a separate alphabet. Definitions are given in historical order, with the etymology tracing the origins of words. A great deal of encyclopedic information is added in the supplements.

**Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary** of the English Language (Funk & Wagnalls Co., NYC). \$20 for one volume containing 455,000 entries. No complete revision since 1913. An authoritative work, edited by scholars prominent in most important fields. All entries, including obsolete words and proper nouns, are in one vocabulary, with current meaning given first. Liberal in adopting simplified spelling. Etymologies less thorough and definitions briefer and less exact than in *Webster's New International*. Contains encyclopedic information.

**Oxford English Dictionary** (Oxford University Press, NYC). \$135 for 12 volumes and supplement, containing 430,000 entries. The great dictionary of the language, giving the history and etymology of words now in use or known to have been used since 1150. Shows difference in meaning, spelling, pronunciation, usage, etc. at different periods of the last 800 years. The work of a group of English scholars, this is invaluable for research, but does not serve as a quick reference tool.

### LARGE, ABRIDGED

**New Century Dictionary** of the English Language (D. Appleton-Century Co., NYC). \$15 for two volumes contain-

ing 160,000 entries. Published 1927, incompletely revised 1933. Good illustrations and clear, readable type. Contains an excellent list of terms used in business. Extensive synonym and antonym list in appendix. Probably the most generally useful dictionary of its size.

**Shorter Oxford English Dictionary** (Oxford University Press, NYC). \$21 for two volumes containing 160,000 entries. Published 1932, incompletely revised 1936. A condensation of the unabridged work, valuable because of its scholarly treatment of word derivations and histories, with numerous dated quotations. Contains no pictorial illustrations, syllabication, or extraneous encyclopedic facts. Primarily British, therefore less useful than the *New International* and the *New Standard*.

**Universal Dictionary** of the English Language (Dutton & Co., NYC). \$12.50 for one volume containing 200,000 entries. 1932 edition. Good format, with entries divided into three columns, and each word entry in bold-face type. A British publication with clear, concise definitions and helpful information on word history and current usage. Omits syllabication, word division, synonyms and antonyms, pictorial illustrations and encyclopedic information. A standard, authoritative work, but an American dictionary with emphasis on our usage would be preferable for most people.

### ABRIDGED: DESK AND HOME

**Webster's Collegiate Dictionary** (G. & C. Merriam Co.). \$3.50 to \$8.75 for one volume containing 110,000 entries. Revised 1941. Abridged directly from *Webster's New International Dictionary*, this work has the same outstanding scholarship and accuracy of content. Definitions are modified in the interest of brevity. Has many supplementary features, including a separate section on new words. Does not contain antonyms, as does *Funk & Wagnalls Collegiate Standard*, which is comparable.

**Funk & Wagnalls College Standard Dictionary** (Funk & Wagnalls). \$3.50 to \$7.50 for one volume containing 140,000 entries. Revised 1934. Also published as *Practical Standard Dictionary* of the English Language. Features single alphabetical order for all words, a characteristic feature of Funk & Wagnalls dictionaries. Most-used present-day meaning is given first position; no obsolete words; simplified spellings indicated.

**Macmillan's Modern Dictionary** (Macmillan Co., NYC). \$3 or \$4 for one volume containing 140,000 entries. Revised 1943. Printed in large, clear

type. No pictorial illustrations or list of synonyms and antonyms. Emphasis on new words, slang and colloquial usage. Sound in definitions, pronunciations and other information, but simplification and popularization lessen the book's value as an authority on the finer points of word usage.

**Winston Dictionary** (John C. Winston Co., Philadelphia). \$2.80 to \$10 for one volume containing 100,000 entries. Revised 1943. Published under titles: *Advanced*, *College*, *Encyclopedic*, with same dictionary content but with varying amounts of encyclopedic material appended. An excellent dictionary, adopted in many schools as the standard authority. Technical and compound words omitted, so that it contains fewer entries than the comparable *Webster's Collegiate* or *Funk & Wagnalls College Standard*. Definitions are simple and accurate.

**Fowler Concise Oxford Dictionary** (Oxford University Press). \$3.75 for one volume containing 75,000 entries. Revised 1934. Follows the methods of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Useful for information on British usage.

**New Universal Self-Pronouncing Dictionary** (John C. Winston Co., Philadelphia). \$1.25 for volume containing 70,000 entries. Revised 1933. Handy, popular and simple dictionary of small dimensions. Good type; clear definitions. Contains many terms encountered in popular science and crossword puzzles. Makes no claim to scholarship, nor has it the earmarks of painstaking accuracy.

**Laird & Lee Webster's New Standard Dictionary** (Albert Whitman Co., Chicago). \$1 for volume containing 40,000 entries. Revised 1939. Also published as *Webster's New Standard*. Not a real *Webster*, but serves satisfactorily if you need a small, simple dictionary.

### ABRIDGED: JUNIOR DICTIONARIES

**Funk & Wagnalls Desk Standard Dictionary** (Funk & Wagnalls Co.). \$2.25 for volume containing 83,000 entries. Revised 1934. All words listed in one vocabulary with common meanings given first. Many new scientific terms included. Has same arrangement and treatment as *College Standard Dictionary*, but with fewer entries.

**Funk & Wagnalls New Comprehensive Standard Dictionary** (Funk & Wagnalls). \$2.50 for volume containing 50,000 entries. Revised 1937. Type large and distinct. Definitions simple but adequate. Characteristic features of Funk & Wagnalls dictionaries: arrangement of entries, including abbreviations and proper names in sin-



gle alphabet; listing of current or more common meanings first.

**Funk & Wagnalls Standard Junior School Dictionary** (Row, Peterson & Co., Evanston, Ill.). \$1.48 for volume including 39,000 entries. 1940 edition. Large type and printed paper make book easy to read. Definitions simple and clear, with familiar meanings given first. All information in one alphabet. Contains about three-fourths as many entries as *Funk & Wagnalls High School Dictionary* and is simpler, omitting derivations and appendices.

**Funk & Wagnalls Concise Standard Dictionary** (Funk & Wagnalls). 90¢ for volume containing 38,000 entries. Revised 1934. Very compact and legible. Proper names and etymological information omitted to facilitate use. Helpful as beginner's dictionary for either school or adult use.

**Webster's Student's Dictionary** (American Book Co., NYC). \$2.60 or \$2.84 for volume containing 57,000 entries. Revised 1943. Successor to *Webster's Secondary School Dictionary*. Not a real *Webster*, but useful for children from the fifth grade through high school. Physical make-up excellent. Contains many appendices of encyclopedic information.

**Thorndike-Century Senior Dictionary** (Scott, Foresman & Co., Chicago). \$2.72 or \$2.96 for volume containing 50,000 entries. Revised 1941. Entries chosen on basis of frequency of usage, which is indicated. Pronunciation symbols reduced to eight. Certain traditional dictionary features such as derivatives omitted to produce a clear, simple, interesting dictionary providing an effective means of learning quickly the spelling, pronunciation and meanings of words commonly used. Type larger than is generally found in dictionaries.

**New Winston Dictionary for Young People** (John C. Winston Co.). \$1.75 for volume containing 46,000 entries. Revised 1943. Also called **Winston Dictionary for Schools**. Large, clear type. Contains more encyclopedic information than *Funk & Wagnalls*, *Webster's* or *Thorndike-Century* Dictionaries in the same class. Definitions clear and adequate. For upper elementary and junior high school use.

## ABRIDGED: ELEMENTARY DICTIONARIES

**Thorndike-Century Junior Dictionary** (Scott, Foresman). \$1.48 for volume containing 27,000 entries. Revised 1942. Entries selected on basis of words most frequently used in Eng-

lish language. Etymologies and appendices omitted. Not condensed from an adult work, but written especially for children. Type large and clear. Numerous line drawings. For children of grammar and high school age.

**Webster's Dictionary for Boys and Girls** (American Book Co.). \$1.36 for volume containing 38,500 entries. Revised 1941. Format excellent, paper good. Valuable for children in elementary and intermediate grades, as well as for adults learning English.

**Picture Dictionary for Children** (Grosset & Dunlop, NYC). \$1.50 or \$2 for volume containing 4800 words and 1200 illustrations. For pre-school and first, second and third grade children. Page divided into boxes containing words in type, script and manuscript; sentences using words; plurals, tenses or comparative forms; many words illustrated with simple line drawings. Useful in learning the alphabet, print-

ing, writing, spelling and discovering new words and their meanings.

## NOT ACCEPTABLE

**Webster dictionaries** (not mentioned above) which are not published by G. & C. Merriam Co. These are based on expired *Webster* copyrights, unrevised and badly out of date. Many of these are poorly printed from old plates, and are difficult to read as well as being archaic. See text for distinction between these and real *Webster's*.

**Young American Dictionary** (Philosophical Library, Inc., NYC). \$3 for volume containing 8,000 entries. Revised 1942. Vocabulary meager, with glaring omissions and inconsistencies in selection. Simplicity of definitions carried to extremes. One of more meanings often omitted in words of multiple meaning. No drawings, diagrams or other illustrations.

# A Note on Rodent Control:

*In addition to its laboratory work, one of CU's important jobs is to collect published material on consumer subjects and to summarize it for the benefit of CU members. This is the kind of job that was done in the article "Rodent Control," which appeared in the October Reports. The material was taken, for the most part, from government sources.*

*A CU member of long standing, who heads an exterminating company, has written us a letter calling us to account for some of the advice given. A further check shows that he is right, and that some of the statements we have made were wrong. Some excerpts from the letter follow:*

"... We are very glad to see you stressing rat proofing, cleanliness and blocking and we are also glad that such an article is educational and calls to the attention of the public the needless destruction caused by rats. We are also glad that you refer these people to bulletins issued by the U. S. Department of Interior. However, we feel that the methods suggested for control have gone short of the goal in the following ways:

"1. You state that barium carbonate may be purchased at any drug store for about 50¢ a pound. We have just finished telephoning to over 40 drug stores in Hudson and Bergen Counties [New Jersey] without being able to purchase any barium carbonate at all. Some have volunteered to purchase some for us if we buy a sufficiently large amount. We do not

know how one would make out in other parts of our country but that is the situation here.

"2. Your second suggestion is phosphorus. People going into a drug store and asking for phosphorus would no doubt be unsuccessful in getting any although nearly all drug stores carry phosphorus under various trade names, and therefore this part should have carried a list of phosphorus preparations.

"3. Arsenic. This material is almost unobtainable. As you know there are various forms of arsenic with varying degrees of toxicity. Therefore this reference to arsenic is quite inadequate.

"4. Strychnine. Its bitter taste is not acceptable to rats, and since it is almost impossible to disguise, its use as a rat poison is almost nil.

"5. Thallium. Not obtainable.

"6. Fumigants. The use of fumigants should be left to the experts only and people should be warned of various ordinances restricting its use. . . .

"It should also be proper to suggest that before hiring any firm, the individual consult his banker, insurance company or any holding company having a great deal to do with the maintenance of real estate, or homes in general. A list of reliable exterminators can easily be obtained from the various agricultural experiment stations in the state or from the various associations of pest control operators. . . ."

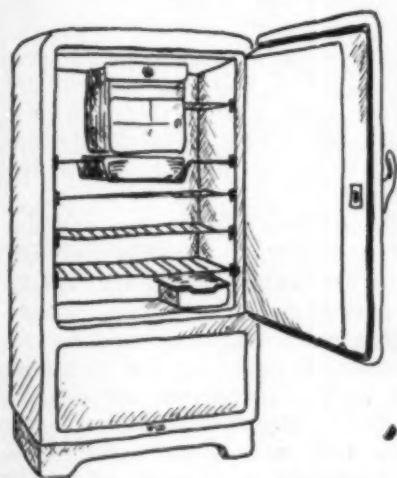


# CARE & REPAIR:

The metals, machines, factories and labor that used to make household equipment are now producing tanks, guns and engines to win the war. Little material can be spared for civilian use; if you want your home to continue functioning efficiently, better join in the "Make 'Em Last" program. It is also essential at this time to get the most from your appliances.

CU presents here a résumé of simple rules to help you get longer, better service from household equipment that can't be replaced.

## ELECTRIC REFRIGERATORS



Keep refrigerator in a cool spot, standing level and firm. Keep it away from direct heat: sunlight, range, radiator, hot-air register, etc. There should be at least 2½ inches between the back of the cabinet and the wall, and eight to twelve inches of open space above it, to insure free circulation of air.

Do not set temperature control lower than necessary. Check temperatures with a thermometer to see that no part of the box, except the freezing compartment, is colder than 40° F.; no place higher than 50°.

Defrost and clean often, once a week if possible. Follow the manufacturer's instructions. Never allow more than a quarter inch of frost to collect on the unit. Be sure the drip tray is empty to catch the melting frost. Never use sharp tools to hasten defrosting; a better way is to remove freezer trays, fill them with hot water, and replace in the unit.

To clean, first empty the box;

A series of suggestions to help you extend the life of your washing machine, sewing machine, refrigerator, vacuum cleaner, etc., plus some tips on how to get maximum economy along with the best possible service

then wash with warm water to which has been added about one level tablespoonful of baking soda to the quart. Wash all surfaces, including inside and outside of the freezing unit, then go over the same surfaces with a cloth wrung from clean water. Never use scouring powder on any part of the refrigerator. Wash the outside with soap and water, rinse and wipe dry. If anything spills in or on the box, wipe it up at once.

Have a check-up by a reliable service man, if anything goes wrong with your machine, or if it seems to run excessively. OPA has set ceiling prices on refrigerator repairs.

## ELECTRIC CORDS

Equipment cords contain copper, and often asbestos or rubber—vitaly needed war materials. Since proper care will save the "life line" of your electrical equipment, observe these precautions:

Disconnect the cord from the outlet each time you finish using a heating or cooking appliance. Disconnect carefully; never "yank."

Put cord away free from kinks, knots or sharp bends. Hang over large, round wooden pegs, or over two or more metal hooks, or coil loosely. See that the same spot doesn't get all the rub or bend.

Store it in a clean, dry, cool place. Keep rubber-covered cords in a dark place. If you keep cords in a drawer, see that there's nothing

sharp in the drawer to cut the cord covering.

Wrap cord loosely around the appliance if it is permanently attached; but let heating appliances cool first.

And for safety's sake, be sure to:

Repair cords at first sign of break or damage.

Keep them away from heat and from water.

Avoid running cords under rugs, or anyplace where they'll get hard wear or can trip people.

Never handle a cord while your hands are wet. Handle a wet cord only if you have a thick pad or a dry cloth in your hands.

When making repairs, always disconnect the appliance or cord first.

Always see that the two wires which form a cord are completely insulated from one another. A short circuit and blown fuse, even fire, may result from disregarding this precaution.

Avoid using unnecessary extension cords. If you must use them, check occasionally for frayed places.

If you need a new cord and can find a source of supply, look for the gold band of the Underwriters' Laboratories if you want a cord for a heating appliance, and the cord must stand a great deal of wear and bending; less durable heating cords have red bands; yellow-banded cords are not for heating, but for appliances such as lamps.

## WASHING MACHINES

Improper use results in breakdowns of the machine, waste of soap and dingy wash.

Know your machine. Whether it's automatic (*Bendix*-type) or an ordinary machine, read the instructions carefully and follow them to the letter.

Don't put in too much wash. Overloading strains the motor and



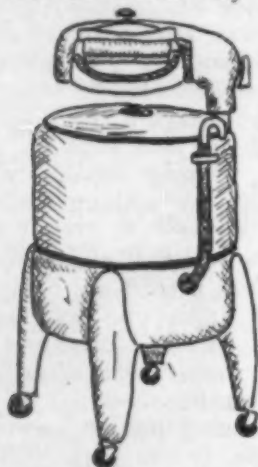
gives unsatisfactory laundering results.

**Use the right amount of water.** Most machines have a water-line marked on the tub. More water may strain the motor, and it may overflow into the machinery; too little water won't permit the machine to operate efficiently, and the result is a poor laundering job.

**Get the most from your soap.** Use only enough to make one-inch standing suds; more won't give cleaner clothes.

**Wash by the clock.** Two or three minutes is enough for wool; three to five for silks and synthetics; five to ten for slightly soiled cottons and linens; 10 to 15 for very soiled cottons and linens. Clothes which are not washed clean in 15 minutes need another washing in clean suds.

**Keep drain clear** of lint and other materials which may clog it.



**Watch the location.** See that the machine stands firm and level. If it is stored in a cold place between washes, the oil and grease may become too stiff to lubricate the mechanism. Bring the machine into a warm room an hour or two before you use it, so that the mechanism is warmed up to room temperature when you begin. Never pour hot water into a very cold enamel or porcelain bowl; sudden temperature changes may crack the finish.

**Protect the machine from bumps and jerks,** which may injure the motor, dent the metal or crack the finish.

**Keep bolts and screws tight, and moving parts oiled.** Check the instruction sheet to see where and how often oiling is necessary, and what kind of oil to use. When oiling, see that none gets on the rubber parts, as oil is disastrous to rubber. If some rubber *does* get oily, remove the oil immediately with soap and

water, then rinse with clear water and dry with a soft cloth.

**Check the current,** when you move, to see that the new voltage and the number of cycles correspond with those specified on the nameplate of your machine. The public utility company can tell you.

**Handle plugs and cords with care.** For safety, stand on a dry floor and have dry hands when you handle the plug. Follow general precautions (above) for cords; never roll the machine over the cord. If your washer should blow a fuse, replace with a 15-ampere size; too large a fuse may permit the motor to be injured or burned out before the fuse blows.

**Test the wringer safety-pressure release each time before you start to use the wringer.** On some machines, the roller wringers are self-adjusting for clothes of any thickness; others need to be set according to the thickness of the clothes.

**Keep hands away from the wringer;** flip an end of clothing into the wringer, but watch to see that the clothes do not wrap around the rollers. Guard clothes and rollers by folding buttons, zippers and buckles inside before wringing.

**On whirler-type machines,** pack clothes a few at a time evenly around the basket, to keep the centrifugal action balanced.

**As soon as you finish wringing,** release the pressure on your wringer rollers. Clean (with soapy water), rinse and dry the rollers. Clear the drain, wash the tub with soapy water, flush with clear water, and make sure that all water is drained from the hose. Dry the machine, roll it into place, and cover with a waterproof cloth if the machine is kept in an exposed place.

#### GAS AND ELECTRIC RANGES



To get the most from your *gas range*, observe the following precautions:

**Make sure adjustment is correct,** so that the proper air-and-gas mixture is fed to the burners. Unless you are familiar with just what to do and how a good flame looks, better have a serviceman do it for you.

**Keep parts clean.** Take out the surface burners regularly and brush away food and dust particles with a stiff brush; use a brush also to clean out the air shutter. If openings in the burner are clogged, use a fine wire to clean them; don't use toothpicks as they may break and further clog the burners. Clean cast-iron burners by boiling them for a short time in a solution of washing soda (one tablespoon to three quarts of water). Use a bottle brush to clean the inside of the tube leading to the burner head. Rinse burners in clear water, drain and dry by putting them in a warm oven for a few minutes.

**Clean the pilot-light porthole** with a fine wire, carefully inserted; clean top-burner pilots with a soft wire brush.

**The oven burner should be removed,** if possible, for cleaning just as the top burners are cleaned. If this is impossible, wash and dry while they are in place. Clean the portholes with a piece of wire, once or twice a year, to guard against clogging. Leave the oven door open for two or three minutes after lighting the burner, to let out the moisture and avoid rusting.

**Remove the racks as well as the oven bottom,** if it comes out. Scrub with soapy water and dry. If the bottom of the oven is made with two pieces of metal with a sheet of insulation between them, don't put it in water or let water run into the insulation—simply wipe with a damp cloth.

If one burner serves both broiler and oven, take out the broiler pans before using the oven to avoid subjecting them to long, intensive heat.

**Keep inside and outside surfaces clean** by washing them, when cool, with a cloth wrung out of warm, soapy water. Use a finely-powdered cleaner, like whiting, for stubborn spots, but rub gently. Never use a coarse scouring powder (see page 11).

*On electric ranges:*

**Be careful not to damage the**



heating wires. Don't touch them with sharp objects or with any metal objects when the current is on. If you do, you may cause a short circuit, blow the fuse, burn out the coil or receive an electric shock. Be especially careful to keep salt, soda, soap and sugar off the coil.

**Don't overheat.** Use pans to fit the unit and lie flat on unit surface. Turn the switch from the highest heat to a lower heat as soon as food starts to cook.

**Never let a pan boil dry,** or turn on the heat under an empty utensil. If the lid of a cooker unit is insulated, don't place it in water. Consult your instruction book for special directions.

**If none of the range units heat,** check the range circuit fuse, first shutting off the current. If any one unit fails to heat, the trouble is probably in the range wiring; if the oven units fail to heat, make sure they are pushed tightly into the outlets at the back of the oven. See that the time and temperature controls, if you have them, are set correctly. Call a serviceman if you cannot correct the trouble easily.

#### ELECTRIC IRONS

Follow these precautions:

**Make sure of your current,** if you move, to see if your iron can be used in the new location (most irons with temperature control cannot be operated on direct current).

**Plug your iron into a wall outlet;** don't use a light socket or a drop plug, if you can avoid it.

**Don't overheat your electric iron,** don't drop it, and never put it into water. For safety and economy, disconnect the iron when you leave it, even when you think you'll be away only a few moments.

**Always set the iron down firmly** on a metal stand or on its heel rest.



Toppling over may break connections and cause fires.

**Keep ironing surface clean,** smooth and free from rust. Remove starch spots with a cloth wrung from soapy water, after the iron has cooled, or with fine scouring powder (see page 11). If the iron sticks as you work, rub it on a little salt sprinkled on paper, or smooth with paraffin or beeswax.

#### VACUUM CLEANERS

**Read carefully** the manufacturer's directions to find out what special care your cleaner requires.

**Pick up pins,** other metal objects, large pieces of paper, string and cloth by hand before you use the cleaner.

**Clean rugs often**—preferably several times a week—and don't skimp on cleaning time. At least ten minutes should be devoted to a 9x12 rug.

**Keep the dirt container emptied.** Keep brushes free of hair and thread. Make sure the brush tips extend below the nozzle.



**Store cleaner in a dry, cool place,** to avoid rusting of metal parts and deterioration of rubber cord and parts.

#### CARPET SWEEPERS

**Run the carpet sweeper with smooth, even strokes.** Use no more pressure than is necessary to pick up dirt. Do not bang the sweeper against furniture, and don't let it stand over hot-air registers.

**Empty the dustpan after each use.**

**Clean the brush often** to keep it from matting. Cut threads and hairs that catch between tufts or around



the axle; then comb the brush clean with a metal comb. Occasionally, take out the brush and clean out the fine dust that collects at the brush ends. To remove oil and wax from the brush, use a dry-cleaning fluid.

**Replace the brush** when the bristles wear down.

**Oil the sweeper,** following the maker's instructions, at least once a month.

#### SEWING MACHINES

**Familiarize yourself with your machine,** and with the manufacturer's book of instructions. If you've lost your instruction book, get a new one by writing the manufacturer, giving him the serial number of your machine.

**Keep the machine clean;** wipe surfaces before you start sewing.

**Select the thread of a thickness and quality to suit the material you are sewing.** Use the same size thread in the bobbin and the top of the machine, except when you want special stitching.

**Use the right needle for the thread and material.** Too coarse a needle will leave holes in the fabric; too fine a needle will break easily.

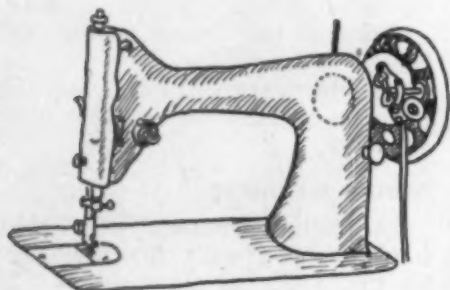
**Don't wind the bobbin too full or too tight,** if your machine does not wind bobbin automatically. If you must wind thread onto a bobbin which already has some thread on it, tuck the end of the first thread under so that it will not interfere with the new thread and cause it to break.

**Set the stitch length to the size you want,** then, if necessary, adjust the upper tension to suit the thread and material; try it out on a sample swatch. On a lock-stitch machine,

the best stitch size is 12 to 16 stitches to the inch. Use longer stitches for heavy material, shorter stitches for fine material. If stitch size is not marked on your control, count stitches in a measured inch of sewing.

Pull enough thread through the needle to keep the needle threaded when the take-up lever reaches its highest point. Pull the under-thread up from the bobbin and draw both threads back under the pressure foot. Hold them loosely until you start to stitch, to prevent bunching of thread.

Push the needle through the material before you start stitching, then lower the pressure foot so that it is in line with the seam you intend to sew. Generally it is best to stitch with the seam at the right. Besides being more convenient for the right-handed worker, it keeps the material from being crushed and wrinkled in the limited space under the head.



For information on how to clean, oil and adjust your machine, or additional pointers on how to run it, write for Farmers' Bulletin No. 1944F, free, in limited quantity, from the U. S. Dep't of Agriculture's Office of Information or for sale by the Sup't of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. (10¢ in coin).

The following, available from the Office of Information, U. S. Dep't of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., without charge, may prove valuable.

How to Make Your Refrigerator Last Longer (AWI-4).

How to Make Your Washing Machine Last Longer (AWI-6).

How to Make Your Gas or Electric Range Last Longer (AWI-8).

How to Make Your Ironing Equipment Last Longer (AWI-11).

Take Care of Your Vacuum Cleaner and Carpet Sweeper (AWI-19).

How to Make Your Electric Cords Last Longer (AWI-20).

## HEALTH AND MEDICINE

HAROLD AARON, M. D., SPECIAL MEDICAL ADVISER

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CU's Medical Consultants give technical advice on matters of medicine which lie within their fields. CU is responsible for all opinions concerning social, economic and public health questions.

### The B Vitamins

First of two articles on the B complex vitamins, with a discussion of B deficiency diseases and some suggestions on how they can be avoided with proper diet

Some fifty years ago, when it was just being established that many diseases were caused by bacteria, hundreds of articles, describing newly-found germs, and "proving conclusively" that almost every known malady of man was due to one or another of these germs were published. Today a somewhat similar situation exists with respect to nutritional ills. New vitamins and vitamin factors are announced almost monthly; investigators are attributing most of man's infirmities to vitamin deficiencies.

It required much slow, painstaking work by well-trained investigators to separate fantasy from reality in bacteriology. A similar task faces the nutrition scientist of today. And today's task is, perhaps, even more difficult, since nutrition is bound up with psychological, social and even political problems, as well as those which are purely medical.

That the medical problems of nutrition are serious has been more and more emphasized in the medical literature of recent years. The recognition that specific diseases such as rickets, scurvy, pellagra and beri-beri are due to specific vitamin deficiencies, and can be cured by specific vitamins has given a tremendous impetus to nutritional research. The fruits of this research have been clearly apparent in this

country in recent years; they will be of tremendous importance in feeding the liberated peoples of enslaved Europe and Asia when the war ends.

Inquiries by nutrition investigators into the eating habits of the American people have disclosed that a high proportion are subsisting on inadequate diets. The consumption of excessive amounts of refined grains, sugar and starchy foods has made it difficult for many persons to obtain needed quotas of the B vitamins. To add to the difficulty, these vitamins are often drained out of the foods in the process of preparing them for the table. So much is clear fact.

Since a multitude of symptoms and disorders with which physicians are confronted in daily practice were attributed to vitamin deficiencies, drug producers and sellers began to offer the vitamins as cure-alls for practically all human ills. And today medical journals, newspapers, magazines and radio programs are inundated with a flood of advertising for vitamin preparations supposed not only to correct and supplement deficient diets, but also to cure symptoms such as "lack of appetite," "fatigue," "muscle pains," "rheumatism," "nervousness," "insomnia," and "eczema," to name only a few.

That drug advertising is intended



not for the benefit of the public, but to sell products and to make profits, is no news to informed consumers. The advertising of vitamin products is a flagrant example of this fact. It is particularly unfortunate, however, that many medical men and scientists, who should know better, have joined with the manufacturers in jumping on the vitamin bandwagon. One distinguished nutrition chemist has, in fact, become so enamored of the subject that he attributes the aggressive, destructive character of nazism to the generous supplies of thiamine (vitamin B<sub>1</sub>) of which the Germans are supposed to have partaken. "Perhaps pacifism is a product of malnutrition," he adds. (Nor is the field of nutrition the only one in which such absurd deductions have been drawn; Dr. Richard Brickner, a neuro-psychiatrist, attributes fascism and nazism to a national mental disorder, in his book, "Is Germany Curable?").

The consumer must tread carefully in this climate of scientific and pseudo-scientific contagion. This article is intended to help the consumer separate fact from fancy in connection with the B vitamins.

#### Is there a widespread deficiency of the B vitamins among the American people?

There is no doubt that millions of people have been subsisting on poorly-balanced diets. Excessive consumption of refined grains, starches and sugars has deprived them of the undeniable virtues present in a balanced diet of natural foodstuffs. As a matter of fact, great demand has made these refined foods cheaper than natural products, and has resulted in even greater sale of them, particularly to the lower-income segments of the population. And the protein foods—meat, fish, fowl, milk and cheese—which are rich in the B vitamins are more expensive than starchy foods.

But even those who can afford to buy the more nutritious foods often meet most of their food needs with refined cereals, cakes, sweets and soft drinks. And despite various well-publicized surveys on food intake, we still have no clear knowledge of the extent of vitamin B deficiency in this country.

#### What are the known symptoms of thiamine deficiency?

The three best-known members of the vitamin B complex are thiamine

(vitamin B<sub>1</sub>), riboflavin (vitamin B<sub>2</sub>) and nicotinic acid (niacin or niacin amide). The National Research Council has established standards for the daily requirement of these vitamins. Of the other B vitamins—pyridoxine, pantothenic acid or calcium pantothenate, biotin, inositol, choline, paraaminobenzoic acid, folic acid—little is known about their effects on human beings or the need for them in the human diet. Remember that next time you see fantastic claims that one or another of these vitamins will cure cancer, or restore color to grey hair.

Among the symptoms attributed to thiamine deficiency are severe neuritis involving the extremities, heart failure, edema (swelling of the tissues), loss of appetite and mental breakdown.

The classical form of neuritis due to vitamin B<sub>1</sub> deficiency is a disease known as beri-beri. An important symptom is impairment of the power of motion and sensation in the arms or legs, or both. But this does not mean that every pain in an arm or leg results from thiamine deficiency; many types of neuritis and neuralgia

are due to other causes. And much time and money are wasted on vitamin capsules, pills and injections that might better go to more accurate diagnosis and therapy.

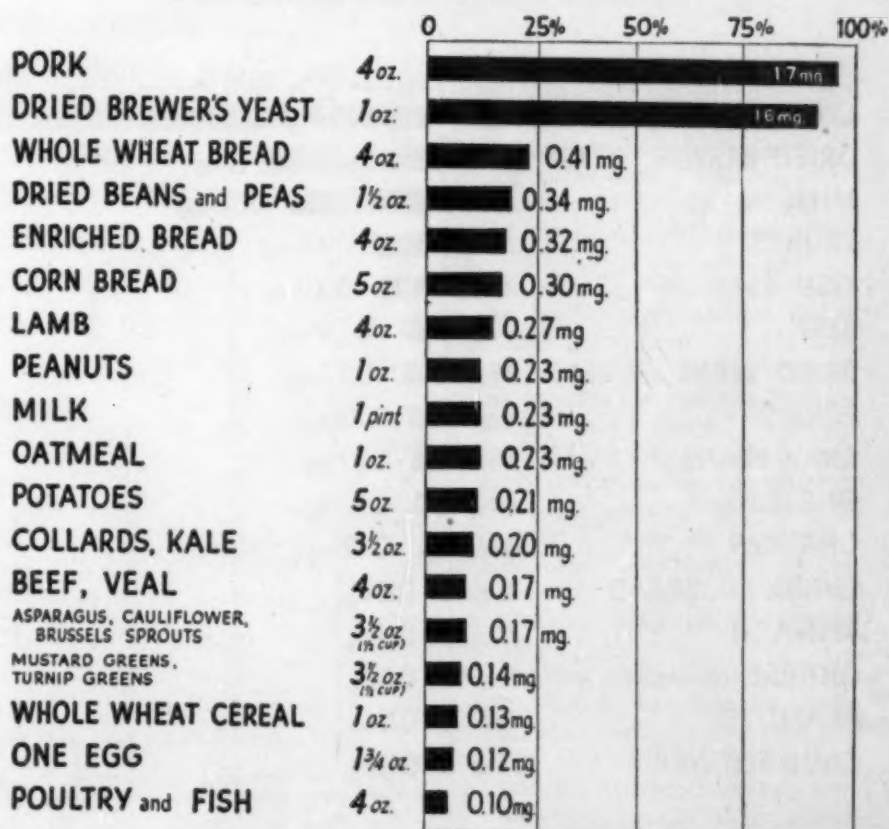
Heart failure and edema also occur in true cases of beri-beri. But beri-beri, with these attendant symptoms, while rather common in the Orient—and probably in starving Europe—is rare in the United States. Angina pectoris and other common varieties of heart trouble are not cured or relieved by thiamine or other vitamins.

Poor appetite is sometimes an early symptom of vitamin B<sub>1</sub> deficiency. But poor appetite does not by any means necessarily stem from vitamin deficiency. Emotional disturbances often cause temporary loss of appetite; deeply-embedded mental conflicts often lead to chronic appetite loss. Needless to say, vitamin pills won't relieve the symptoms of these psychic difficulties.

Other mental symptoms have also been attributed to thiamine deficiency. Included are fatigue, insomnia, nervousness, hysteria and irritability. It is true that in the final stages of

### FOODS AS SOURCES OF THIAMINE

(expressed as percentage of adult daily requirement)



beri-beri, delirium and coma may occur. But it has never been shown conclusively that mental changes occur as a result of diets moderately deficient in any of the B vitamins. The fact is that practically everyone is subject to occasional periods of nervousness, depression, irritability and insomnia—these are some of the natural consequences of war as well as serious economic and family tensions. Further, a large percentage of the population suffers from more or less chronic “nervousness” due to personal, unconscious mental conflicts. These everyday neuroses, with their many symptoms and side-effects cannot be cured by either a balanced diet or a thiamine supplement. Nor, unfortunately, can vitamin pills cure patients who fill our hospitals for the insane.

In the words of two outstanding investigators,<sup>1</sup> “In the absence of any of the major objective symptoms, when the only evidences of

<sup>1</sup> Everett Holt, Jr. and Victor A. Najjar of Johns Hopkins Hospital, in an article entitled “The Clinical Diagnosis of Deficiencies of Thiamine, Riboflavin and Niacin,” *Journal-Lancet*, November, 1943.

deficiency are vague and highly non-specific, such as poor appetite, lassitude, vague pains, poor sleep, emotional irritability, etc., the diagnosis of thiamine deficiency becomes even more tenuous. Yet it is precisely on such grounds that thiamine is being prescribed or is being self-administered to our population on an appalling scale. The propaganda comes from places high and low, from those commercially-minded and those with altogether altruistic motives. . . . The conservative medical man can hardly be blamed if he fails to resist the current and permits himself to prescribe B vitamins, and thiamine in particular, for symptoms which are common to the great majority of diseases he has to treat.”

#### What evidence indicates thiamine deficiency?

Though real beri-beri is rare in this country, and the symptoms of thiamine deficiency enumerated in gaudy vitamin ads may apply to many other conditions, true thiamine deficiency does exist. But diagnosis

of mild or moderate deficiency is not simple, and should not in any case be trusted to self-diagnosis based on symptoms described in the vitamin ads. It is a much safer course to discuss with a physician the possible factors contributing to the deficiency. For thiamine deficiency, these include:

#### CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

1. *An unbalanced diet* over a period of several months or more. A predominance of carbohydrates is the most common fault; refined cereals and breads, cakes and pastries, sweets and soft drinks are too frequently the foods from which the major part of the caloric intake is derived. According to the best available evidence, for every 1000 calories food intake there should be about 0.3 milligram of thiamine, and in starchy, refined foods this thiamine accompaniment is lacking. In whole-grain and other natural foods, adequate thiamine is present.

2. *Disturbances* that interfere with the intake, utilization or absorption of vitamins are most likely to occur in conjunction with prolonged and severe diarrhea, chronic disease of the intestine, or of the liver. A vitamin deficiency is not likely to occur in cases of “nervous indigestion” or “irritable colon.” Nor is there evidence that “gas” or constipation either predispose to or are caused by thiamine lack.

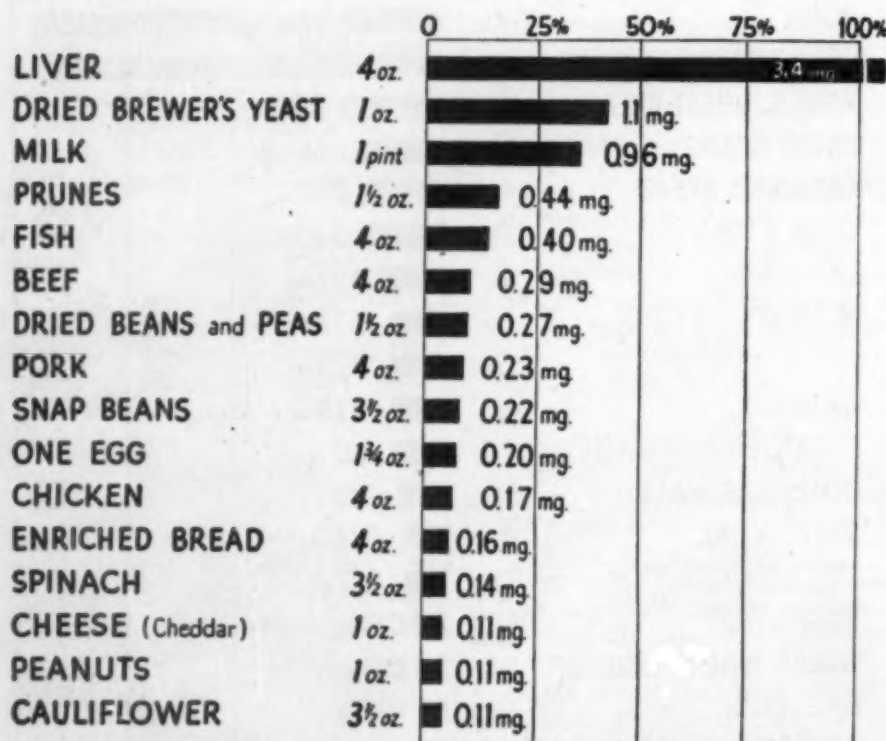
3. *Requirement of more than average amounts of thiamine* by the tissues may bring about a deficiency. The most important of the conditions which may bring about especially high requirements are hyperthyroidism, pregnancy and lactation, fever and severe and prolonged exercise. Even in these conditions, the thiamine requirements may be met adequately if attention is given to the essentials of a good diet (see table).

#### Can thiamine deficiency be diagnosed objectively?

In extreme thiamine deficiency—beri-beri—the diagnosis is easy. It is in the border-line cases—so-called “sub-clinical deficiency”—that the diagnosis is difficult. Too often it is based on a “therapeutic test.” A patient complains of tiredness, aches and pains. The doctor prescribes thiamine tablets or vitamin B capsules. After taking a few, the pa-

### FOODS AS SOURCES OF RIBOFLAVIN

(expressed as percentage of adult daily requirement)





tient feels better. Therefore the doctor concludes that the patient's trouble was vitamin B deficiency.

Fifty years ago, doctors used to produce similar "cures" with pink pills; a hundred years ago, such cures were achieved by blood-letting. In fact, the unfortunate *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy has been noted throughout the long history of medicine.

The fact is that a large proportion of the everyday illnesses for which patients consult doctors are psychological in origin. Fatigue out of proportion to work, chronic aches and pains, depression, sexual "weakness"—these are common symptoms of neuroses. And the symptoms are likely to be relieved, *temporarily*, by any remedy the doctor prescribes with sufficient enthusiasm—that goes for vitamin tablets, pink pills and blood-letting.

Recently, a simple, objective test to determine deficiency of the three

main B vitamins was devised in the laboratories of Johns Hopkins Hospital. According to available evidence, this test appears to be as close to a certain method of diagnosing thiamine deficiency as has yet been found. By analysis of a single specimen of urine, collected under specific conditions, it is possible to determine whether the body reserves of the three B vitamins are deficient, and whether the patient needs specific vitamin treatment. According to the originators of the method, Doctors Holt and Najjar, "The body reserves . . . are reflected in the urinary excretion of these substances, the vitamins failing to appear in appreciable quantity when the body is deficient."

Although this method is still in the experimental stage, it is to be expected that the equipment will be made available to clinics, hospitals and practitioners if the trials prove successful. At present, diagnosis

must depend largely on the three contributing factors discussed above: adequacy of thiamine in the diet, digestive disturbances, and unusually large thiamine requirements.

More discussion of the vitamin B complex, with ratings of many of the popular brands of vitamin B products, including the "shotgun" vitamin mixtures (those containing many different vitamins) will appear in an early issue of the *Reports*.

## MEDICAL NEWS AND VIEWS

On the basis of clinical evidence, the Council on Physical Therapy of the American Medical Association has accepted ultraviolet lamps, under properly controlled conditions, to supplement other methods of disinfecting air in hospital nurseries, hospital wards and operating rooms. It has *not*, however, accepted this method of disinfecting air in schools, waiting rooms, public gathering places and large halls, nor does evidence now available show that the incidence of colds can be reduced by installing ultraviolet lamps and irradiating enclosures occupied by people.

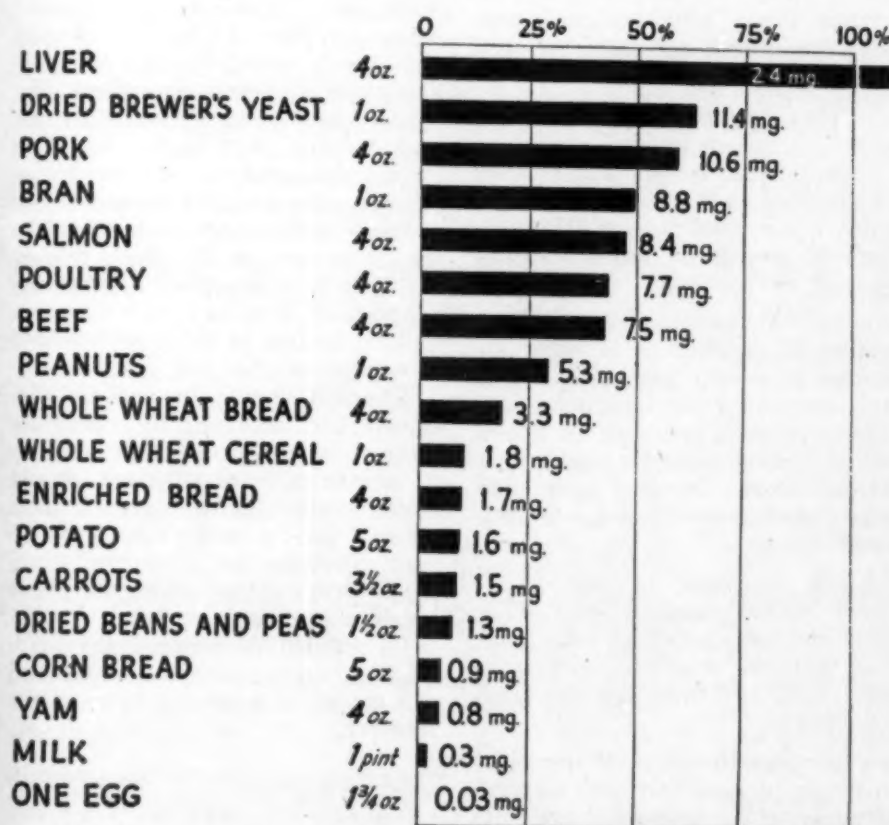
Of specific interest to consumers is the Council's finding that such irradiation cannot be depended upon to sterilize solid objects, such as drinking cups, combs, brushes, shaving utensils, toilet seats and shoes, even if irradiation of the entire surface is possible.

To kill a micro-organism, a direct hit by sufficiently intense ultraviolet rays is required. This is difficult to accomplish on the edge of a drinking cup, for instance, because ultraviolet rays cannot penetrate deeply, and thus may be absorbed by the finger marks, saliva, cosmetics or other foreign material on the cup. Sterilization is also difficult to accomplish in a liquid containing suspended matter or in air laden with dust particles which shield the organisms.

Many "rest rooms" are using ultraviolet lamps to disinfect toilet seats. In most cases, consumers pay extra for this deluxe "protection." The Council's finding indicates, however, that such protection is unreliable.

### FOODS AS SOURCES OF NIACIN

(expressed as percentage of adult daily requirement)



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# NEWS AND INFORMATION

## Social Security

**An analysis of the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill, which would provide social security, including medical care for most Americans; along with some notes on those who favor and those who oppose this Bill; why it deserves your support**

On June 3, 1943, Senators Robert F. Wagner of New York and James E. Murray of Montana, and Representative John D. Dingell of Michigan introduced into their respective houses of Congress identical bills (S1161 and HR2861), popularly known as the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill, to establish a single unified national system of social insurance. In addition to the provisions for old age, sickness and unemployment insurance, the Bill provides for medical care and hospitalization—services not provided to the people of this country under present social security laws. It is the latter items in the Bill that have aroused the greatest controversy.

Leading the opposition to the Bill is the "National Physicians Committee for the Extension of Medical Service," the political appendage of the American Medical Association. The Committee is already in full cry against the Bill, organizing sentiment against it among consumers and farmers as well as physicians. Close behind, though slightly under cover in opposing the Bill, are the big drug and chemical corporations and the insurance companies.

Because of the importance of the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill to the welfare of the American people, it is desirable that consumers know its main provisions, as well as something of the nature of the opposition. The following analysis<sup>1</sup> gives the main outlines of the Bill:

1. The Old Age and Survivors' Insurance System now furnishing benefits to some 60,000,000 persons (30,000,000 employed and their dependents) is expanded so as to include—in addition—agricultural workers, domestic servants, most

employees of non-profit organizations, self-employed persons and many government workers. By these extensions about 100,000,000 persons would be covered. Eligibility requirements are eased and benefits are liberalized.

2. The Old Age and Survivors' Insurance System is further supplemented by the establishment of benefits for permanent total disability at any age over 18, in amounts equivalent to those paid under old age insurance. Where rehabilitation is possible, the needed medical care may be authorized.

3. The unemployment insurance system is made a Federal instead of a Federal-State system. The benefits are enlarged over those now paid in many states, and a correlated nationwide system of public employment offices is set up.

4. Workers temporarily disabled because of sickness or accident are entitled to weekly payments, at the same rate as under unemployment insurance, for a period of 26 weeks, with a waiting period of one week. Married women workers have additional benefits for 12 weeks of maternity leave.

5. All members of the armed forces would become entitled to social insurance benefits on discharge from service, without contribution from them for their period of national service.

6. A national system of insurance providing medical care and hospitalization is set up. Every licensed physician is entitled to serve under the Bill, but is under no compulsion to do so. Every insured person is permitted to select the physician of his

choice. The physicians themselves can decide, by voting in each community, whether they wish to be paid by a fee for each service rendered, by a capitation fee (a fixed fee per year per patient), or by salary.

7. The entire program would be financed by contributions from beneficiaries and employers under a unified system. A single payroll deduction of 6% from employed persons and a corresponding amount from their employers would be required. Self-employed persons would pay 7% of the market value of their services. Wages or earnings over \$3000 a year are not considered in computing the payroll deductions from employees or the payments from the self-employed. However, persons with incomes over \$3000 are eligible for service. Insurance payments in behalf of war veterans would be reimbursed directly from the general funds of the Federal Treasury.

8. Finally, the Bill provides for the extended and unified system of aid to the States in caring for dependent persons.

These are the main provisions of the Bill which is considered the American equivalent of England's Beveridge Plan. As Senator Wagner has already stated, the Bill is not in any sense a perfect instrument. But it is a basis for legislative study and consideration. And in this Bill there is the framework for the most constructive development in social and medical welfare yet undertaken by the American people. With this in mind, it is imperative to enlist the support of informed and forward-looking leaders in social service, and in medical science and practice.

The Bill should be actively discussed and analyzed by consumer groups; when hearings are held on it, consumer representatives should have the opportunity to present their views. In the meantime, write to your Senators and Representatives to tell them that you are eager to have hearings start without delay.

(A detailed discussion of the medical and health provisions of the Bill will appear in a coming issue of the *Reports*.)

<sup>1</sup> This summary of the Bill is condensed, in large part, from an article in the August, 1943, issue of the journal, *Medical Care*. This progressive journal is published by the Committee on Research in Medical Economics, edited by Dr. Michael Davis. A reprint of the article containing an analysis of the provisions of the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill may be purchased for 5c from the Committee on Research in Medical Economics, 1790 Broadway, NYC.



# FOR THE PEOPLE

## F&DA and Sulfa

With multitudinous new sulfa-products being brought forth, and the public becoming daily more sulfa-conscious, it's good to know that F&DA is finally taking steps to separate the legitimate products from the phonies. The case in point is a trial, now in preparation; involving therapeutic claims for a sulfanilamide ointment.

Said to be the first such trial, the case concerns *Pso-Ridisal*, manufactured by the New Basic Product Co., Royal Oak, Mich. The label claims it's efficacious for psoriasis, while F&DA contends that the label statements are false and misleading. The product is widely advertised as a remedy for psoriasis and other skin infections. The manufacturer has denied all allegations.

CU will follow the affair with interest. So far, F&DA has not announced any general policy with respect to sulfa-containing ointments, and most states permit dispensation of such products without prescription. But, as we have pointed out (see the *Reports*, May, 1943), indiscriminate self-medication with such products may have serious consequences.

## AMA's "Seal of Approval"

A recent issue of the *Journal* of the American Medical Association announces that AMA's Council on Foods and Nutrition will henceforth restrict its seal to "special purpose" foods or those "promoted for a special group of the population in relation to health, growth and development." Products designed especially for babies or invalids are typical of these "special purpose" foods.

"General purpose" foods—those used by most of the population—will, in the main, no longer be eligible for the seal. Reason: The strides that the Food & Drug Administration is making in establishing standards of identity for foods and rules on labeling.

Firms whose "general-purpose" foods now carry the seal are allowed a year to dispose of their AMA-labeled supply.

## Accent on Penicil'lin

If you've been wondering about the pronunciation of this new germicide, wonder no longer, for we have a decision:

Seems that this problem was also bothering the scientists closely associated with the new agent and, at a meeting of the Massachusetts Medical Society, the weighty question was submitted to arbitration. Those in favor of peni'cillin numbered only 30%, while penicil'lin polled a 70% vote; so penicil'lin it is. Maybe you'd better do some word—or idea—associating to remember it by. Back to Spanish grammar, then, and the rule about stressing the penultimate syllable. Or maybe just memorizing the approved pronunciation is easier, after all.

## Kopal and "The Beauty Quest"

"How to start a run on your product," is the compelling headline of an ad run by the *New York Times* in the trade publication *Drug Trade News*. Seems it's all very simple: Just advertise in the proper medium

(three guesses), and the "hundreds of thousands of women seriously interested in the pursuit of beauty" will flock in and get dealers to stock the merchandise. To prove its point, the copy goes on to tell what happened when Beauty Editor Martha Parker mentioned a product in her column, "The Beauty Quest":

"Writes the general manager of *Kopal*, the cosmetic for the teeth: *Kopal* is doing very well in midtown stores and a good part of its success is due to your fine description in 'The Beauty Quest.'"

We recommend taking "The Beauty Quest" with a grain of CU. For, in the opinion of CU's dental consultant (see the *Reports*, May 1943), *Kopal* is hard to apply, doesn't match the teeth, takes over an hour to dry, may irritate the gums, cracks and chips off easily, and has a few other disadvantages. In fact, for CU's money (and for yours) *Kopal* is definitely "Not Acceptable."

## War Workers and Nutrition

War workers handling TNT, picric acid and related explosives are subject to a poisoning which seems to be counteracted by supplying them with an extra 100 milligrams of Vitamin C daily. And many war plants are giving vitamin tablets or capsules to such employees, according to a series of reports released by the New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Nutrition.

The report is not intended as a sales argument for vitamin concentrates; it contains brief statements by nutritional authorities on both the "pro" and the "con" of supplying vitamin concentrates to workers.

Particularly encouraging is the fact that *proper nutrition* is the keynote of the report, which recommends that the New York Legislature amend the Industrial Code to require canteens in war plants, to serve nutritious meals at reasonable prices.

This is something CU has been stressing for a long time, now. Vitamins, for the normal person, should come from food, not pills. (For the cheapest and best ways to fill your vitamin C quota, see the *Reports*, October, 1943.)

## Emphasis on Breakfast

"Eat a Better Breakfast," say colorful Kellogg ads, while their two radio shows, "Breakfast at Sardi's" and "Don McNeill's Breakfast Club" boost the government's nutrition program (and Kellogg sales!) by extolling the virtues of *Kellogg's Corn Flakes*, *Rice Krispies*, *Pep*, *All-Bran*, *Krumbles*, *40% Bran Flakes*, etc.

By all means eat a better breakfast, but don't think that you need these high-priced prepared cereals to do it. As CU has pointed out (see the *Reports*, September, 1943), uncooked whole-grain cereals not only offer more for your money than prepared ones, but you're likely to get better nutritional value as well. They *do* take more time to prepare, of course, since they must be cooked and eaten warm. And even if you haven't the time or inclination to make or eat hot cereals, don't look to *Kellogg's* for good values among prepared brands; CU's tests showed them all to be comparatively high in price.

And don't let all the advertising in the world sell you on bran, especially if you have a sensitive digestive tract. The best advice of nutrition experts on bran is: "Avoid it."

# LABOR

Even in wartime, textile labor is low-paid. Minimum hourly rates, even in the union shops making sheets, range from 47½¢ to 52¢—around \$20 a week. Wages in the North, which is more highly unionized, average around \$30 for a 43-hour week. Average Southern wages are \$24 for a 41-hour week. Even these low figures represent an improvement over 1942—an improvement which has been won largely through union organization, supported by consumers who look for union-made products when they buy.

The following sheets tested by CU are union-made, under contract with the Textile Workers Union of America (CIO).

Nashua Mfg. Co., Nashua, N. H.: *Dwight Anchor, Indian Maiden*; Pacific Mills, Boston: *Truth, Pacific*; Pepperell Mfg. Co., Boston: *Lady Pepperell, Pepperell Percale, Duchess, Princess, Peeress*; Pequot Mills, Salem, Mass.: *Pequot*; Utica & Mohawk Cotton Mills, Bedford, Mass.: *Utica*; Wamsutta Mills, New Bedford, Mass.: *Wamsutta Supercal*.

The following sheet manufacturers are non-union, according to the TWU:

Cannon Mills, NYC; Fruit of the Loom, Inc., Providence, R. I.

The following are distributors' brands, which may be bought from different manufacturers at different times. CU has no information on the labor conditions under which they were manufactured.

AMC: *Ambassador, Consul, Regent, Aimcee*; Filene's: *Vendome, De Luxe, Empress*; Gimbel's: *Gramercy, Greeley, Greymoor, Gabrielle*; Macy's: *Macy, Supre-Macy, Percale, Mayflower*; Marshall Field: *Golden Gate, Wearwell, Duracale*; Penney: *Savern*.

None of the manufacturers' brands of towels tested by CU are union-made, according to the Textile Workers of America (CIO).

The following are distributors' brands, which may be bought from different manufacturers at different times. CU has no information on the labor conditions.

AMC, CD, *Fieldcrest, Gimbel's, Hale Bros., Macy's, Sears, Ward's*.

## Another Job for Consumers—continued from page 3

ness community is best fitted to solve these problems in the public interest; and they want the government to keep hands off. Because Congress has shown that it likes the sound of their voices, it is by no means impossible that these business men will have their way. We know of no graver danger to the nation.

In business, as in every other field, there are leaders who can rise above the pettinesses of their own jobs and be trusted to serve the general welfare no matter what the cost to themselves. But to trust business in general—the National Association of Manufacturers, the trade associations, the individual companies—to solve problems of conversion to peace-time production and the provision of full employment for returning soldiers and war workers; to take the reins out of government hands when the war stops, will be to invite disaster.

A statement by Charles E. Wilson, Executive Vice-President of the War Production Board and formerly head of the General Electric Company, which was quoted recently in CU's *Bread & Butter*, is worth repeating here because of the light it throws on the danger of letting big business do the planning for peace:

"From where I sit in Washington, it is an appalling thing to see the separate groups and cliques and special interests separating out of the main body of the American war effort in order to work for their own special purposes and private ambitions. Too many of us, I fear, have lost sight of our real goals and purposes in this war. Too many people are trying to position themselves for the post-war period long before the country is out of danger and long before our fighting men have any chance to position themselves.

"Some of these special political and economic groups want to win complete victory for themselves regardless of the consequences for others and for the nation. Each group carries with it its own peculiar set of prejudices and hates and political pressures. Sometimes these groups can be made to see reason—sometimes they can be browbeaten into cooperation—but by and large they represent a serious menace to the unity of the nation, to the war effort and to the lives and future of American fighting men.

"Now we are coming into an election year, when passions and prejudices are likely to be accentuated through the normal interplay of party politics. I submit

that if we give way to those passions and prejudices, if we allow them to influence our actions, if we lend ourselves to the breaking up of the society into partisan groups and cliques, we are playing into the hands of the enemy. More than that, we are jeopardizing our entire national future. Many of us in the 1930's feared that a left wing reaction would draw labor so far away from the main body of American sentiment that the gap could not be closed without a disastrous struggle. I do not want to be an alarmist—perhaps I exaggerate since I spend so much time in Washington, where politics is always exaggerated—but I tell you frankly that I am deeply alarmed today over the possibility that a right wing reaction may draw some sections of capital so far away from our traditions as to imperil the entire structure of American life as we know it."

When it comes to post war problems, companies will do what most of them have always done—worry about their own individual problems (of which they'll have plenty) and let the other fellow take care of himself. As a matter of fact, the franker business leaders admit that coordinated planning is necessary—but most business groups don't want the government to do it.

And that, in fact, is the issue: not, shall business do it or shall government do it; but shall the government be allowed to make and enforce plans, and exercise essential controls over private business after the war. Consumers know that there are times when government control is essential. Not for many years have we heard any suggestion that control of food and drug products by the Federal Food & Drug Administration and by State and municipal agencies be abolished; or that control of public utilities be ended. We can't argue the point here, but some business leaders as well as the college professors and government officials have recognized that the trends of business and industrial development in past years and particularly during the war, will make expansion of previous government controls unavoidable.

Unless war-time controls continue for a long time after the fighting stops, unless Congress permits the government to plan and direct the process of reconversion and reemployment, there is danger ahead.

Because the path we are to take will be decided by Congress in the coming months, the decision will be made beforehand by you and other voters. Informed consumers have a special duty to perform in 1944.



# They Keep It Under Lock & Key!

"You might be interested to know," reports a reader, "that in some libraries *Consumer Reports* are kept under lock and key. I looked for the *Reports* in a New England public library and couldn't find them. So I spoke to the librarian."

"Oh, yes, *Consumer Reports*," she smiled. "We have those, but we can't keep them on the open shelf. Too many people borrow them *permanently*. We have to keep them under lock and key!"

Librarians aren't the only ones who have this trouble. Lots of CU members tell us their friends make a habit of borrowing their *Reports* permanently.

If you have such friends, have you tried to get them to join CU themselves?

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**It's worth a try! Drop us a line for full details.**



## 5000 sold in schools

5,000 copies of *Consumer Reports* are sold monthly to students in schools, at special classroom bundle order rates. Teachers of English, Home Economics, Science, Arithmetic, Business Management, and Consumer Education all use the *Reports*. Teachers shouldn't overlook this excellent bet for wartime teaching. CU will send a sample copy, together with Consumer Class Plans, giving plans and projects for wartime consumer education, to any teacher who is interested. Drop a card to Consumers Union, 17 Union Square, New York City, 3.

### CONSUMERS UNION OF U. S., INC.

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Please send me full information about signing up a group of ten or more to become members of Consumers Union at a reduced rate.

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ADDRESS.....

.....CUGI

# A Quiz For Consumers

*If you have a persistent cough, should you*

- ☐ Chew *Luden's* cough drops?
- ☐ Use a *Musterole* plaster?
- ☐ See your doctor?

*For a hangover, is the best remedy*

- ☐ Another drink?
- ☐ *Bromo Seltzer*?
- ☐ Take a bit of milk of magnesia or bicarbonate of soda?

*Is the best remedy for a cold*

- ☐ Vitamin capsules?
- ☐ *Sal Hepatica*?
- ☐ Rest in bed?

*If you want to lose weight should you*

- ☐ Go on a banana and milk diet?
- ☐ Drink *Welch's* Grape Juice?
- ☐ Cut down on calories?

*For occasional constipation should you*

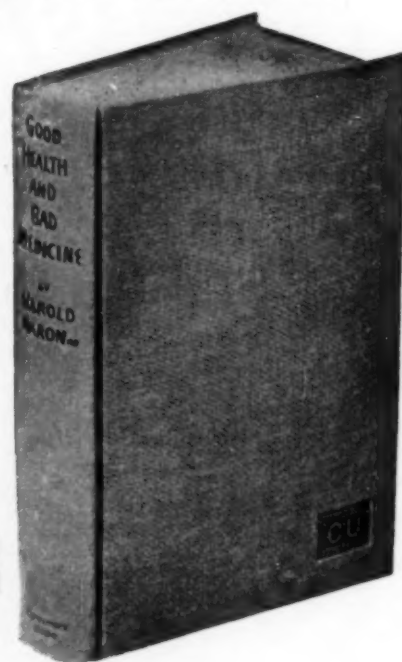
- ☐ Take *Sal Hepatica*?
- ☐ Eat *Kellogg's All-Bran* for breakfast?
- ☐ Forget it; or if it persists take a mild laxative?

The answers to the questions in the quiz at the left are, for the most part, pretty obvious. Not so obvious are the answers to posers such as:

- Why do you sometimes feel nervous and run-down when physical examination shows nothing wrong?
- What are the causes and cures of constipation?
- What causes insomnia and how can it be cured?

These and many others are answered in

## GOOD HEALTH AND BAD MEDICINE



**\$1.50 to CU Members • \$3.00 in bookstores**

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I enclose \$....., for which please send a copy of "Good Health and Bad Medicine," at \$1.50 a copy, to the following:

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Name.....

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GHI

NOTE: If you would like to order more copies, or if you wish any of them sent as gifts, with a card naming you as the giver, please indicate on a separate piece of paper.

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